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January 1998
Number 79

FIRST THINGS

Evangelicals and Catholics on
THE GIFT OF SALVATION

Edward Cardinal Cassidy on
A COMMON MISSION

Stephen D. Smith on
THE CONSTITUTION OF BABEL

The Editors on
ROE: 25 YEARS LATER

ALSO: On Not Permitting the Other To Be Other • James Nuechterlein on Infanticide • Phillip E. Johnson on Stephen Jay Gould • John J. Reilly on *Nothing Sacred* • Lawrence A. Uzzell on Religion in Russia

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: Mark A. Noll on Billy Graham
Margaret Boerner • Brian C. Anderson • Gilbert Meilaender
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Richard John Neuhaus
The Public Square
A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

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Editor-in-Chief: *Richard John Neuhaus*
Editor: *James Nuechterlein*
Managing Editor: *Matthew Berke*
Associate Editor: *J. Bottum*
Publisher: *Institute on Religion and Public Life*
Publishing Service: *Publishing Management Associates*

FIRST THINGS: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $29 per year by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to FIRST THINGS: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life, P.O. Box 3000, Dept. FT, Denville, NJ 07834. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 3000, Dept. FT, Denville, NJ 07834. 1-800-783-4903. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, OH 44846.

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Islam and Religious Dialogue

The tenor of Richard John Neuhaus' Public Square essay on the book *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam* by Bat Ye'or ("The Approaching Century of Religion," October 1997) seems entirely misdirected if the intention is to encourage understanding as well as dialogue between the various religious communities. The essay contains several factual errors, misses a number of very important progressive social movements in the Muslim world, and demeans rather than encourages dialogue about important religious and social differences.

First, with regard to the hoary notion that the Islamic world did nothing but preserve and pass on philosophical and scientific learning from the Greeks and other ancient civilizations: Father Neuhaus has latched on to an outdated and faulty conception that he takes directly from the concluding pages of Professor Bat Ye'or's Epilogue—not the main subject on which Bat Ye'or is a specialist. To put it boldly and bluntly, it is now widely recognized that from about the eighth century till the end of the thirteenth century, the Arabic-Islamic world had the most advanced science to be found anywhere in the world. This was so in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, optics, and medicine.

In the field of astronomy, where the great theoretical breakthrough to modern science is usually located, the planetary models developed by the astronomers at the Marâgha observatory, culminating in those of Ibn al-Shatir (d. 1375), were virtually identical mathematically to those of Copernicus, with only minor differences in some parameters, though the Arab models remained geocentric. Nor were the Arabs lacking in technical or mathematical skills. In fact, their skills in trigonometry, which the Chinese lacked, resulted in the establishment of a Muslim bureau of astronomy in Peking in the thirteenth century.

But more: Professor Roshdi Rashed has shown that Arab mathematicians in the eleventh and twelfth centuries achieved mathematical innovations that were not accomplished by Europeans until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He lists the following achievements, above all in the work of al-Karajî (d. 1129) and al-Samaw'al (d. 1174): "the extension of the idea of an algebraic power to its inverse after clearly defining the power of zero, the rule of signs in all generality, the binomial formula and the tables of coefficients, the algebra of polynomials, and above all, the algorithm of divisibility, and the approximation of whole fractions by elements of the algebra of polynomials." In addition to this, the Arab-Muslims of this same period pioneered three forms of experimentation, in optics, astronomy, and medicine. In short, it is gravely mistaken to suggest that nothing of any intellectual significance was created in the Muslim world in the medieval period, roughly 850 to 1350—or that whatever creative advances did occur there were produced by non-Muslims.

Likewise, it is highly misleading to suggest that it was the cultural elites fleeing Islamic oppression who then "rescued" all of this knowledge for the West. Current historical scholarship tells a very different story, which includes many European intellectuals who traveled widely in the Muslim world and gained access to a great variety of Arabic manuscripts in science and philosophy and translated them into Latin, as they realized that Europeans had much to learn from this bounty of knowledge. There are many well-known books by contemporary historians of Arabic-Islamic science in which all of these widely understood facts have been spelled out—but to which neither Neuhaus nor Bat Ye'or makes any reference.

Speaking sociologically, Fr. Neuhaus has also entirely neglected the many elements of change and reform now going on in the Muslim world. One of the most notable concerns the feminist movement in the Muslim world, where there are highly trained and deeply knowledgeable

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intellectuals bravely mastering all the ancient scholars' sources—hadith and Quran—for the purpose of new interpretations of the Islamic message as it applies to women. Many of these individuals would be happy to advocate the notion of "Equal before Allah," the title of a collection of Muslim feminist writings (by Fatima Mernissi and Riffat Hassan) of the highest quality now appearing in Indonesia.

Likewise, there are many other intellectuals who are striving to understand the Islamic message as it applies to *this day*, and such efforts include a brave new hermeneutical study of the Quran by Mohammad Shahrour. Nor should we overlook the significance of the work of the prolific Sudanese scholar, Abdullahi An-Na'im, who calls for Islamic reform based on a deep knowledge of Islamic law. Other studies suggest that the traditional scholars—the ulama—are being displaced by a great wave of educated Muslims, fully fluent in Arabic, who, probably for the first time in the history of Islam, outnumber the traditional scholars. This is likely to have a positive influence on Islamic thought in the future.

Lastly, I would bring to the attention of your readers the extraordinary legal reforms recently brought about in Malaysia, whereby the Qadi courts—the religious courts—have been dramatically upgraded and made intellectually equal to the secular courts in every respect, while eliminating the many disparities between male and female legal rights. The legal scholar Donald Horowitz has discussed these changes in some detail. None of this sounds to me like Huntington's phantom "clash of civilizations."

If the Institute on Religion and Public Life truly wishes to engage Muslims in a dialogue, perhaps it should start with a radically revised image of contemporary Islam, while issuing a much more cordial invitation to Muslims and others to participate in it. In my view, tremendous good could be accomplished for the world if Muslim intellectuals from all over the world were brought together here and elsewhere to participate in prolonged intellectual dialogue in a truly open public sphere.

Toby E. Huff
Dept. of Sociology & Anthropology
Univ. of Massachusetts, Dartmouth
North Dartmouth, MA

The writer is author of The Rise of Early Modern Science: Islam, China, and the West (*Cambridge University Press, 1993*).

Annulments and Gobbledygook

I have a few questions after reading Robert Royal's "'Catholic Gobbledygook'" (October 1997). First, may one assume that the reason Joseph Kennedy II sought an annulment of his marriage to Sheila Rauch was to contract a subsequent marriage approved by the Roman Catholic Church? If the answer is "yes," then did the Church exercise more wisdom the second time than it did the first time? Did it deny the sacrament of matrimony to someone whom it judged to have been incapable of contracting a sacramental marriage the first time around? If not, why not? If the priest who officiated at Joe and Sheila's wedding was unable to discern that, as an experienced fellow priest quoted in Royal's article puts it, "the Kennedys . . . are screwed up," should a priest asked to officiate at Joe's subsequent marriage have been wiser? Finally, how many chances at a sacramental marriage does Joe, or any Catholic with an annulment, get? Two? More?

Forgive me if I find Mr. Royal's article ultimately unconvincing. Some of us whose traditions recognize marriage as valid from the beginning, regardless of the eventual outcome, find the annulment route dishonest. I was divorced after twenty years of marriage. My marriage failed. But that fact does not render it invalid from the beginning. If the Roman Catholic Church wants to uphold the strict teaching Jesus gave us about divorce and remarriage, I support it. But if it wants to play games with the rules, declaring that a true sacramental marriage never existed simply because it eventually

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broke down, while never interfering with this supposedly invalid marriage as long as the couple stays together, I grow cynical. The old term "Catholic divorce" for annulments seems very appropriate nowadays.

(The Rev.) Jeanne Devine Bonner
College Hill United Methodist Church
Wichita, KS

I presume Robert Royal wanted his readers to conclude that the annulment process in the United States is *not* "Catholic gobbledygook." He didn't persuade me.

A couple of steps to clear the underbrush. First, as the maxim has it, hard cases make bad law. Let's take away Sheila Rauch Kennedy and The Person Who Used To Be Called Her Husband But Never Really Was. Second, there is a good deal of "Catholic bashing" around, most of it poorly reasoned, much of it contradictory. Put that aside, too, and look at the issues.

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Res ipsa loquitur. Mr. Royal notes that "only 338 annulments were granted in America in 1968; more recently, the annual figure is around sixty thousand." What, pray, did the Defender of the Bond say about that: the number of Catholic marriages has been growing steadily by more than 20 percent a year since 1968? Catholics take the law 20 percent more seriously each year?

And how, in light of the stupendous growth in the number of annulments, can Mr. Royal credibly assert the "rigor" of the process? The only support he provides is the fact of review by another tribunal. That process sounds suspiciously like the old "peer review," which in business and education is a series of mutual back rubs. How many annulments approved by a first tribunal are rejected by a second? We are not told. To show the rigor of the process, Mr. Royal should tell us what percentage of applicants succeed with the first tribunal, and what percentage of those succeed at the next tribunal.

Further, Mr. Royal writes he was told by the Defender of the Bond that "many of [those seeking an annulment] want to be able to remarry in the Church with a good conscience." I am troubled by that statement. One cannot, in good conscience or in bad conscience, be married twice in the Church unless the first marriage is annulled. Thus, getting married again in the Church has nothing to do with the state of one's conscience and everything to do with a judicial decision. Coming out on the "right" side of that decision requires a revelation of a state of being in the past that made one incapable of marriage. Does anyone doubt that in very many cases the person seeking annulment (over)emphasizes his or her immaturity and susceptibility ("grave lack of due discretion") at the time of the first marriage? Surely many of these persons are marrying a partner not before married in the Church, and the annulled partner wants to be able to have a Church wedding to please self, family, and friends.

The heart of the matter is whether an individual's conscience is made "good" by a decision of a marriage tribunal. Good conscience comes from sacramental forgiveness of sin: the sacrament of penance does not imply I did not sin but that my sin is forgiven. In contrast, a decision of annulment concludes most commonly that I was incapable of making an adult decision when I thought I was getting married. There was no bad conscience. (Of course, there is the potential problem analogous to the "political cover-up": there was no violation of law except the perjury during the investigation. Similarly, it is just possible in one or two cases of the sixty thousand annulments per year that a participant actually knows he or she was no more or less capable of marriage on the occasion of the first wedding than on the occasion of the second.) It is my opinion that many of the participants in the annulment process simply want their ticket punched, and do not really believe more than that the first marriage was a mistake that should not bind them for life. This is a view with which I am in much sympathy. . . .

Christopher Conroy
Montclair, NJ

Robert Royal, by his convoluted logic, has added significantly to the "Catholic gobbledygook" involved in the annulment of the marriage of Joseph and Sheila Kennedy.

I appreciated very much his explanation of the principles set down by the Church in the decision making necessary in such matters. I was impressed specifically in that "grave lack of discretion" is to be considered a reason for annulment. I'm shocked, angered even, to learn that the Kennedy petition was granted at the request of Joseph!

Mr. Royal acknowledges frankly that such lack of discretion was Sheila's, and we can all agree. But she is the one who is decided against. She is the woman who has lived in adultery! It is her children who are bastards! And, I presume, the Roman Catholic Church will allow either or both to marry (again?); or will it be for the first time, the sins of the past all forgiven?

"Sheila Rauch made a bad bet on Joe Jr.," Mr. Royal says. Sorry. Is that

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all? Joe may understand his Church better than we think.

Paul N. Ellis, Bishop (Emeritus)
The Free Methodist Church of North America
Lakeland, FL

Mr. Royal did a fine job in explaining the reasons for annulments. But he failed to mention the clergy whose task it is properly to prepare people for the sacrament of marriage.

If "the Kennedys and Sinatras were all screwed up" in the first place, should not the priest have determined that fact before the marriage and then refused to perform the ceremony?

And if they were granted the annulment on those grounds, should not any priest refuse them a second marriage on the same grounds? . . .

John Peacock
Fremont, CA

For this new Catholic, the annulment issue has proven to be about the only fully doubt-producing element of acceptance. This is not because of the Kennedy furor so much as several not rich and not famous couples where a woman and long-time mother experienced the same denial of her sacramental vows and intentions.

I have taken some comfort in the knowledge that these incidents do not represent decisions of the Pope himself or of Rome. They are, perhaps, the use of local power by more culture-accommodating dissidents who thus achieve bits of what they cannot impose as doctrine or teaching.

I do wish, however, that staunch Catholic writers would not confuse defense of the principle upon which the annulment process was instituted (reasonable and holy) with defense of the misuse and abuse of the practice (which does happen). And while Robert Royal is absolutely correct that the media love to bash Catholicism whether it does or it doesn't, some of that venom may spring from the reasonable expectation that in the "do" a demanding church should at least be consistent with its own "do not."

Not only is much demanded of one to whom much has been given, but the world demands greater virtue of one who claims to define virtue. This, of course, is consistent with the ultimate reality that we win the hearts and minds of others more by what we are than by what we say.

Dorothy T. Samuel
St. Cloud, MN

Robert Royal replies:

I agree with Pastor Bonner that no Catholic priest should recklessly remarry a person whose marriage has been declared null. Without serious work in understanding and trying to overcome the previous problem that made the sacrament invalid, this would be mere invitation to disaster. This is why I wrote that after an annulment, some people "are encouraged by the better tribunals, given deep-seated problems that have been uncovered, to go through counseling before thinking about remarriage."

But she has completely misunderstood my account and Church teaching if she thinks that anything about the annulment process means "declaring that a true sacramental marriage never existed simply because it eventually broke down." The whole point of annulment—and of my article—is precisely to distinguish such misfortunes from authentic sacramental impediments. At a distance, the difference may be imperceptible. Up close, however, it might be wiser to refrain from cynicism.

Christopher Conroy makes a number of emotional flourishes, but I'm afraid generally misses the point. Looking at the raw number of annulments, I too dislike it. But we all know people who have had odd circumstances in marriage; multiply that across sixty million American Catholics and sixty thousand annulments a year may still be far too many, but not simply ridiculous, as Mr. Conroy suggests. He is right, of course, that all sorts of later rationalizations and shifts in emphasis may occur by people desiring an annulment. Most of the priests involved in marriage tribunals have the same concerns, and to suggest without proof that they wink at untruths borders on slander.

But I believe Mr. Conroy is wrong to separate questions of conscience from judicial decision so absolutely. The whole annulment process is an attempt to discern whether free action of the marriage partners or a prior impediment resulted in the breakup. That would seem inevitably to mean sorting out raw emotions so that we can know whether questions of conscience are pertinent. Finally, he falls into the very emotional mode he condemns; he has "sympathy" for the notion that a mistaken marriage should not bind for life. For Catholics, there is no warrant in Scripture or tradition for emotion alone to supersede carefully articulated doctrine.

About Emeritus Bishop Ellis, the only thing I can say is if he has a coherent point, other than annoyance with the Catholic Church, I can't seem to find it.

John Peacock makes a serious point that I could not deal with in a brief article: given the numbers of annulments these days, the Church

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does have a greater responsibility to decide about the appropriateness of specific unions and to prepare people better. But to do so in a culture like ours, it would have to be willing to undertake searching probes into couples' readiness for marriage and to establish strict rules for what to do about problems discovered. A consummation devoutly to be wished, but, even if adopted, likely to be regarded as one more instance of Catholic "rigidity."

I do not disagree with Dorothy Samuel, except in her view that I confuse principle with practice. Her letter is rather typical of reactions to annulments, however, in that it reflects trust of the Church in matters except where a personal friend has been involved. In such instances, we must maintain solidarity with our friends, but need to be careful that friendship does not become bias. To be more specific, I too have long believed that there are too many lax tribunals granting too many annulments on grounds that were too flimsy. Looking into the matter with people whom I have great reason to trust on these and other questions (and who know them far more intimately and in a variety of circumstances), I still don't like the apparent ease of annulment or its tendency to conform the Church to contemporary America. But it was Edward Banfield, I believe, who once estimated that 5 to 10 percent of every society is incapable of independent functioning. Some of those people, alas, contract ill-started marriages.

Whose Experiment?

I have to differ with the crux of Professor Ian A. Hunter's complaint ("Canada's Judicial Captivity," August/September 1997). If I read him correctly, he complains that the problem with a written bill of rights is that it *is written* ("not self-interpreting"), therefore leaving in the hands of nonelected judges the interpretation of its meaning. As the crux of his logical argument, he concludes that "divine" nature cannot be legislated, calling upon Kingsmill's *The Poisoned Crown* for moral support.

May I point out, with respect, that that argument seems not germane to the problem. Prof. Hunter posits that the point of a bill of rights is to legislate man's better nature, but that is not clear from my reading of history. It seems a constitution is written to define the *form* of a government, and a bill of rights is written to define that government's *purpose*. The Declaration of Independence contemplates that governments are formed among us to secure our individual rights; ergo, a bill of rights exists solely to codify those rights that government must secure.

Justice William J. Brennan held that a constitution is continually being ratified with each generation, and that it is up to court justices to rewrite the constitution according to their sense of the people's will today. This is the heart and soul of our problem. Written constitutions, bills of rights, and laws are not the problem. Justices who misconstrue the issue of sovereignty are the problem. Since the people ratify the constitution, which creates the government, the people are sovereign over government, not the other way around. Any justice, in short, who places himself above the very document that creates the bench at which he sits destroys his very purpose for existence—and his judgments, therefore, as well. . . .

If we do not approve of something that our government is doing, we can always change our government through the amendment process—even rewrite the thing from scratch. We may make mistakes, but *we are responsible*. The situation is at once both awful and awesome, but this is what is *new* about the "American Experiment." To my Canadian cousins I say: Welcome to the experiment.

Richard Stauch
Cypress, CA

Ian A. Hunter replies:

Canadians, I believe, want no part of the "American Experiment," new or old; so thanks, Mr. Stauch, but no thanks. I did not suggest that the purpose of a bill of rights is to "define a government's purpose." That is parliament's job. The purpose of a bill of rights is to protect minorities against the excesses of majoritarian democracy. My criticism is that the Canadian Charter of Rights has not done that; instead it has given an increasingly vain and imperious judiciary the opportunity to legislate.

No Women Disciples

I was intrigued by the exchange of opinions in the correspondence that appeared in your October 1997 issue between James Nuechterlein and critics of his article "Catholics at Home." I would like to respond to one statement in Mr. Nuechterlein's reply: "We are not persuaded that the fact that Jesus was a man precludes women from officiating at the Eucharist."

One would hope that reflection on the decision of our Lord not to include women among the twelve disciples would rouse more than passing consideration, particularly in light of the fact that the Lord was unhesitant to break social taboos, such as direct converse with a woman, and an outcast Samaritan at that (John 4:9). But even without such reflection, there is much more at work here than Mr. Nuechterlein seems willing to consider.

The universal church's position against the ordination of women is based on its obligation to be faithful to our Lord's word, by which it knows the truth (John 17:17). The foundation of the church is the Apostles and the Prophets, with Christ Jesus as chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). The "cafeteria line" forms most quickly when this foundation is questioned by those who would say, "Oh, yes, Paul may have said that, but . . ."

The fact remains that the ordination of women is woefully lacking in theological foundation, unless of course the foundation for theology in those churches that do ordain women to the pastoral office has become popular enthusiasms, such as feminism, egalitarianism, and pragmatism. Those Christians who oppose the ordination of women must continue to echo, with all charity and humility, the words of St. Paul, "If anyone is disposed to be contentious,

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we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God" (1 Corinthians 11:16).

(The Rev.) Paul T. McCain
Assistant to the President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
St. Louis, MO

Kudos to the Cardinal

It is difficult to express adequately my admiration for Cardinal Lustiger's examination of where mankind stands at the end of the millennium ("Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," October 1997).

For me (an evangelical Protestant and teacher of history), this masterpiece was particularly gratifying from a uniquely crucial vantage point. The article inspires new hope that conservative believers can unify on the major issues facing modern man and thereby undo some of the damage that has been done through interminable suspicions and bickering. . . .

Charles R. Lewis
Lindale, TX

I was more moved by Cardinal Lustiger's observations than by anything I have read in a long time. He did not overlook the most vital issues—the dignity of every human being, our relatedness to God as our creator, and the scriptural view of our sonship of God. In a time of social rebellion it is good to be reminded that true freedom is not license but submission—with understanding—to God's plan and purpose for his creation.

Donald E. Kohlstaedt
Spokane, WA

What We Don't Know about Homosexuality

In "Love, No Matter What" (Public Square, October 1997), Richard John Neuhaus seems prone to reducing homosexuality to a matter of sexual activity, maybe because it then becomes easier to understand, no different from two little boys playing sex games because they haven't yet found a cooperative girl. Someone needs to tell them they're engaged in unacceptable behavior.

I suggest Father Neuhaus take a closer look, not at the sexual act, which is generally comprehensible, but at the incomprehensible, the love and longing for someone of the same sex, which, in my mind, defines homosexuality. I've been considering the matter since my son was sixteen and told us he was gay. He's now twenty-three and I still don't understand it.

The fact is, we don't know what homosexuality is. We do know, however, that we are often eager to condemn that which we do not understand. We invoke a rational response called "creative complementarity of male and female" or the "teleology of the body," defenses that could also be used to prove that God wanted us to engage in sex with as many people as possible. Or that the celibate among us are violating the laws of nature.

The truth seems to be that nature expresses itself in an incredible variety of ways. Apparently God chose to build into creation a system that allows us an almost infinite variety of life. To insist that we are all made alike is misguided. To insist we must all fulfill a utilitarian role is inhumane. . . .

Conservative Christians can continue to insist homosexuality is contrary to God and nature and we can continue casting young homosexual males onto their own. Their fathers aren't equipped to guide them and they live in a subculture that has been ravaged by an incredible amount of suffering and death. HIV continues to spread unabated among young gay men because the HIV-positive among them don't always tell their sexual partners they're positive and don't always use condoms. There is no prevailing ethic among them regarding sex because, in part, they have been rejected and abandoned by the group of people who function as the conscience of society.

Fr. Neuhaus' suggestion that we respond with "love, no matter what" is excellent advice. I hope conservative Christians accept the suggestion. So far we've had nothing but emotion fired by cultural warfare, a determination to compartmentalize or denigrate that which we do not understand, and valiant attempts to defend positions that are not grounded in Scripture, experience, or nature. Meanwhile, an enormous number of young men continue to suffer.

Terry Pringle
Abilene, TX

Liturgical Anarchists

In "The Best and the Brightest" (Public Square, October 1997), Father Neuhaus has again, with good cause, removed the tourniquet from the terrible wound in Christ's Body inflicted by a liturgical anarchy carried out under the guise of liturgical reform. This wound must be healed.

Liturgical anarchists in principle ignore parishioners. These liturgists *know* the parishioners will be upset, so why consult them? One example: At a parish I belonged to some years ago, the pastor announced that we

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would no longer kneel during the consecration. Because this pastor had already informed me of enlightened notions like the Virgin Birth and Immaculate Conception being "superstitious nonsense," I decided to go to a priest I trusted in another parish and ask him what kind of action I should take in the matter. He told me, "What your pastor is doing is wrong, but you must stand during the consecration. If you kneel you will be the cause of scandal." I obeyed. But this obedience is interpreted as approval!

Some of the legitimate reforms that I am grateful for include the priest facing us during Mass (I can see *all* the gestures of Our Lord during the Last Supper), the Mass spoken in English (I love hearing every word in the language I speak), and the women present around the altar (Jesus chose to associate with women in a time when it was frowned upon). But I also am grateful that our bishops have decided to keep the beautiful Tridentine Mass present in the world, for we are a people who cannot be severed from our tradition as we move with courage into the future.

During a Marian feast day, a priest celebrating the Mass, a man opposed to Marian devotion, refused to bless the roses at the Mass and contemptuously referred to the statue of Mary in our church as "a plaster saint." This attitude, getting rid of Mary, seems widespread in the so-called "liturgical reform movement." The priests justify this attitude with the admonition, "Jesus is the focus of our faith, not Mary!" But wasn't it Jesus who said to the disciple John (and to us), "There is your mother"?

A priest once described the problem this way: "Today many priests who have taken a vow of obedience to the Magisterium end up violating that vow, while the laity practice an unspoken vow of obedience to the priests who are disobedient." . . .

Gil Costello
Seattle, WA

Jesus' Essence and Being

I am writing about Father Richard John Neuhaus' warning (While We're At It, October 1997) against the suggestion "that Jesus was not, not *really*, a human being." He also decried the *Wanderer* stating that "the hypostatic union means that Jesus . . . had, from the moment of conception, a perfect knowledge of all things."

I think Fr. Neuhaus should read Etienne Gilson's *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas*, Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Humani Generis*, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Article 3 of Part I.

Catholic theology and philosophy places a real distinction between created nature (essence) and existence (being). In the human person, "being" or existence occurs only when the human nature is individualized by matter and personalized (made a human person). As Jesus was not a human person but a Divine Person hypostatically united to a human nature, he was not a "human being," per Fr. Neuhaus. It is Catholic teaching, expressed in the papal encyclical *Humani Generis*, that Jesus had the beatific vision from the first moment of his Incarnation (conception).

Divine knowledge is wordless: human knowledge uses words. Jesus' "I" or "Ego" had consciousness of both knowledges, but was limited with his created human intellect in expressing the wordless knowledge of the Divine Intellect. That Jesus had a perfect knowledge of all things from the moment of his conception is what is taught in *Humani Generis* and in the *Catechism*, sections 473 and 474. This does not mean that he could express in human words what he was conscious of with his Divine Intellect.

I really expect better from FIRST THINGS.

(The Rev.) Clare J. Hendricks
Columbia, TN

RJN replies:

The point I was making, in distinction from the confusing phraseology of the *Wanderer*, is succinctly stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 472, page 119. Father Hendrick's nice distinction between being and existence notwithstanding, Jesus the Christ was and is what is universally meant by a human being, albeit a human being in perfect union with God, whom he also was and is.

The Least Dangerous Branch

I was glad to see (While We're At It, October 1997) that Richard John Neuhaus has discovered Alexander Bickel's *The Least Dangerous Branch*, a defense of the United States Supreme Court. Now I hope that Father Neuhaus will contemplate the following passage from this contemporary classic:

> The Supreme Court's law . . . could not in our system prevail—not merely in the very long run, but within the decade—if it ran counter to deeply felt popular needs or convictions, or even if it was opposed by a determined and substantial minority and received with indifference by the rest of the country. This, in the end, is how and why judicial review is consistent with the theory and practice of political democracy.

Glenn N. Schram
Hammond, IN

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FIRST THINGS
JANUARY 1998

Roe: Twenty-Five Years Later

Twenty-five years ago, on January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States, in what numerous constitutional scholars have called an act of raw judicial power, abolished the abortion laws of all fifty states. The news went out that the Court had settled the controversy over abortion. A generation later there is no more unsettled and unsettling question in American public life, and a settlement is nowhere in sight. For the next generation as well, it seems possible that abortion will be the bloody crossroads where conflicting visions of the kind of people we are and should be will do battle.

In an editorial following the *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* decision of 1992, we wrote:

> For years, some of us have been writing about the "culture wars" in which our society is embroiled. We are two nations: one concentrated on rights and laws, the other on rights and wrongs; one radically individualistic and dedicated to the actualized self, the other communal and invoking the common good; one viewing law as the instrument of the will to power and license, the other affirming an objective moral order reflected in a Constitution to which we are obliged; one given to private satisfaction, the other to familial responsibility; one typically secular, the other typically religious; one elitist, the other populist. The strokes are admittedly broad, but the reality is evident enough to anyone who attends to the increasingly ugly rancor that dominates and debases our public life. And, of course, for many Americans the conflicts in the culture wars run through their own hearts.

One might argue whether the two nations are more or less divided today, but the reality has not substantively changed. No other question cuts so close to the heart of the culture wars as the question of abortion. The abortion debate is about more than abortion. It is about the nature of human life and community. It is about whether rights are the product of human decision or, as the Founders declared, an endowment from our Creator. In the words of Pope John Paul II in the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, the abortion debate is about the conflict between "the culture of life and the culture of death." It is about euthanasia, eugenic engineering, and the protection of the radically handicapped. Press almost any of the great social and moral disputes in our public life and, usually sooner rather than later, the argument turns to abortion. That is what it means to say that abortion is the bloody crossroads.

In *Roe v. Wade* and related decisions, the Supreme Court has gambled its authority, and with it our constitutional order, by coming down on one side of this great conflict. The result is a clear declaration of belligerency on one side of the culture wars. And one result of that is a constitutional crisis created by what is aptly described as the judicial usurpation of politics. Another result weighs even more heavily on those who believe—in accord with all scientific evidence and sound reasoning—that the life terminated by abortion is a human being. Not in a distant time and place, but in our time and in our land we have witnessed these past twenty-five years the legal killing of approximately thirty-five million innocent unborn children. We do well to recoil when it is put so bluntly. The desperate search for euphemism is understandable, but it is in vain.

Remember how it happened. The conventional telling of the story is that the Court only gave a nudge to what was already happening. The author of the majority opinion, the late Justice Harry Blackmun, opined, "Roe against Wade was not such a revolutionary opinion at the time." Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has said that the radical decision of *Roe* was unnecessary because society was already moving toward the same result of its own accord. The conven-

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tional telling of the story is false. When the *Roe* decision came down, pro-abortionists and anti-abortionists alike expressed amazement at the sweeping change that the Court had imposed upon the country. A "liberalization" of existing law was expected by most; the abolition of all law protecting the unborn was expected by almost nobody outside the Court itself.

It is twenty-five years later and most Americans still do not believe how radical is the abortion regime imposed by *Roe*. The pro-abortion media persist in reporting that the law permits abortion in the early months of pregnancy and only for compelling reasons, and many prefer to think that is so. In fact, abortion is legal at any time for any reason during the entire pregnancy, and, as partial-birth abortion makes starkly clear, beyond. In the regime of *Roe* and its judicial progeny, psychological distress triggers a constitutional right to abortion, even if the distress is occasioned by being denied an abortion. The new order imposed by the Court is abortion on demand. Some object to that phrase. Call it abortion on request or free market abortion. Whatever it is called, it is the unlimited right to the private use of lethal force against innocent human beings.

We may seek moral shelter behind claims that it is not *really* a human being, that it is only a potential human being, that it does not look like a human being. But we know that nothing that is not a human being has the potential of becoming a human being, and nothing that has the potential of becoming a human being is not a human being. We hold against it that it is totally dependent, but it will be as dependent one month outside the womb as it is one month inside the womb. Nor can we entirely repress the knowledge that, in the moral tradition that formed our culture, the condition of dependence obliges others to be dependable. As for it not looking like a human being, the embryo or fetus, or call it what we will, is exactly what a human being looks like at that age. It is what each of us looked like when we were that old.

We must never lose sight of the fact that the abortion regime of *Roe* was arrogantly imposed by the Court. At the time, the country was *not* moving toward liberalized abortion, never mind abortion on demand. This is amply documented also in pro-abortion writings such as David Garrow's history, *Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade*. It began with contraception when in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) the Court "invented" (Garrow's word) the right to privacy, the putative right on which *Roe* was later based. Until then, the opponents of restrictions on contraceptive devices had failed to win a single legislative victory. As for abortion, Alan Guttmacher of Planned Parenthood flatly said in 1963 that any abortion law suggesting the non-humanity of the fetus would "be voted down by the body politic." He was right. It is true that in 1970 New York and Hawaii "liberalized" their abortion laws, but the changes were narrow and contentious, and it is generally acknowledged that in New York opinion was shifting back to support for laws protective of the unborn.

The larger picture was unmistakably clear. In 1967, "reform" measures, usually limited to therapeutic exceptions, were turned back in Arizona, Georgia, New York, Indiana, North Dakota, New Mexico, Nebraska, and New Jersey. In 1969, such bills failed to get out of committee in Iowa and Minnesota, and were defeated outright in Nevada and Illinois. In 1970, exceptions based on therapeutic reasons were defeated in Vermont and Massachusetts. In 1971, on the eve of *Roe*, repeal bills were voted down in Montana, New Mexico, Iowa, Minnesota, Maryland, Colorado, Massachusetts, Georgia, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Ohio, and North Dakota. In 1972, at the very time the Court was considering *Roe*, the Massachusetts House by a landslide vote of 178 to 46 passed a measure that would have bestowed the full legal rights of children on fetuses, from the moment of conception. At the same time, the supreme courts of South Dakota and Missouri upheld state anti-abortion laws. At the moment Justice Harry Blackmun was putting the finishing touches on his opinion in *Roe*, 61 percent of the voters in Michigan and 77 percent in North Dakota voted down repeal. Everywhere, in every test, the voters overwhelmingly rejected the doctrine that individuals are answerable to no one other than themselves in the matter of abortion. In the face of that reality, the Court imposed the regime of *Roe*. That is what is meant by an act of raw judicial power.

This past year, writing for a tenuously unanimous Court, Chief Justice William Rehnquist refused to invent a constitutional right to assisted suicide, noting the political dangers of abolishing the existing laws of virtually all the states. Although the 1973 decision was not mentioned explicitly, there was no mistaking the reference to *Roe*. The Court acknowledged that it dare not do again what it did in *Roe*. Yet *Roe* was left untouched. While a majority of the Court is not prepared to say that *Roe* was rightly decided and some Justices say it was a monumental error, it is a decision that the Court is afraid to correct. That is the indisputable message of *Casey*, in which the astonishing assertion is made that the legitimacy of the Court and the rule of law itself depends upon the American people accepting the abortion regime imposed by *Roe*.

The proper response to that claim was offered by a broad array of Christian leaders in the statement "We Hold These Truths" (see FT, October 1997):

> In *Casey* the Court admonished pro-life dissenters, chastising them for continuing the debate and suggesting that the very legitimacy

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> of the law depends upon the American people obeying the Court's decisions, even though no evidence is offered that those decisions are supported by the Constitution or accepted by a moral consensus of the citizenry. If the Court is inviting us to end the debate over abortion, we, as Christians and free citizens of this republic, respectfully decline the invitation.

That statement also declares:

> Our goal is unequivocal: Every unborn child protected in law and welcomed in life. We have no illusions that, in a world wounded by sin, that goal will ever be achieved perfectly. . . . [But] we are convinced that the Court was wrong, both morally and legally, to withdraw from a large part of the human community the constitutional guarantee of equal protection and due process of law.
>
> The American people as a whole have not accepted, and we believe they will not accept, the abortion regime imposed by *Roe v. Wade*. In its procedural violation of democratic self-government and in its substantive violation of the "laws of nature and of nature's God," this decision of the Court forfeits any claim to the obedience of conscientious citizens. We are resolved to work relentlessly, through peaceful and constitutional means and for however long it takes, to effectively reverse the abortion license imposed by *Roe v. Wade*. We ask all Americans to join us in that resolve.

That is, we believe, precisely the right response and the necessary resolve. As many others have done, the religious leaders point to the ominous parallels with the infamous *Dred Scott* decision about slavery in 1857. At the time of that decision, there seemed to be little hope for its reversal, and it was reversed in fact only by the bloodletting of civil warfare. God willing, we do not face the prospect of another civil war. It is impossible to imagine what civil war would mean today. But the cleavage in our society over abortion and related questions touching on respect for human life is deep and ominous, comparable only to the cleavage over slavery. In the way that we now look back on slavery, we hope that Americans of the next century will look back with deepest shame on the abortion regime of *Roe*.

Twenty-five years is a long time in our political history, a short time in the human story. Many Americans refuse to recognize the horror of abortion on demand, many have gotten used to it, and a substantial number support it. *Casey* was right in saying that the American people are being tested by the regime of *Roe*, but the test is whether we have the decency and the will to overthrow it. Elections are important to that testing. It seems quite possible that the next President will appoint four Justices to the Supreme Court. Also important are fresh legislative initiatives at the state and federal levels, persistent activism, and unrelenting public education. And prayer without ceasing.

The culture of death commands a formidable array of powerful institutions. With few exceptions, it has in its service the establishment media, the universities, the foundations, the corporate elites, the labor unions, the oldline churches, and, of course, the courts. More than any other question in public dispute, abortion on demand is the core commitment of the American establishment. The institutional base of the culture of life seems pitiably weak by comparison. But on the side of the goal of "every unborn child protected in law and welcomed in life" is moral truth, and what we must hope is the enduring, if sometimes inarticulate, decency of most Americans. This people, we must also hope, have not entirely lost their taste for self-government. They have not agreed to be ruled by nine unelected lawyers on the Supreme Court. They have not, in the words of Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, "practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal."

Roe v. Wade will, one way or another, sooner or later, be a nightmare past. Millions of lives depend upon it, our moral self-respect depends upon it, our constitutional order depends upon it, the rule of law depends upon it. Join prayer to resolve that the way be peaceful and the end be sooner rather than later. FT

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This Time

Infanticide for Beginners

James Nuechterlein

It was the issue of abortion that taught me to be suspicious of the word "reform." It was the early 1960s and all right-minded people were in favor of "abortion reform." I assumed I should be too until it gradually dawned on me, slow learner that I was, that people speaking of abortion reform were speaking of making it easier to take human life. That made a powerful impression on me, and ever since I have been acutely aware of the ability of people of liberal persuasion, especially when it comes to life issues, to obscure what is actually going on through artful semantic evasion.

That art has, it seems, taken a great leap forward. In an article entitled "Why They Kill Their Newborns" in the *New York Times Magazine* (November 2, 1997), Steven Pinker, a professor of psychology at MIT, suggests we ought to lighten up about infanticide, and he begins the process of thought reform by eliminating the word "infanticide." In its place he proposes two words: "neonaticide," the killing of a child on the day of its birth, and "filicide," the killing of a child at some later point. You see the advance. Who would not more lightheartedly engage in neonaticide or even filicide than something so off-putting—even, might one say, so infra dig—as infanticide?

Not that Prof. Pinker, author of the recent and widely noticed *How the Mind Works* and currently a hot intellectual property, actually comes out in favor of infanticide, under whatever name. Indeed, he courageously affirms that "killing a baby is an immoral act" and adds that while we can try to understand what would bring a mother to such an act, "to understand is not necessarily to forgive." But he then sets out on a mode of analysis that, forgive baby-killing or not, renders it not much more than a moral misdemeanor. Not much more, perhaps, than abortion.

Pinker's point of departure is the recent spate of headlines regarding young women who, in a variety of circumstances, have killed, or left to die, their newborn babies. Such behavior, it turns out, is built into "the biological design of our parental emotions." For us mammals, parental investment is a limited resource, one we must decide to allot either to newborn or to current and future children. Human evolutionary history, with its record of high infant mortality, has taught us to make hard choices, including, where necessary, consigning the newborn weak to death. "We are all descendants of women who made the difficult decisions that allowed them to become grandmothers in that unforgiving world, and we inherited that brain circuitry that led to those decisions." My hard-wiring made me do it.

Well, not quite. Natural selection does not "push the buttons of behavior directly," but it does endow us "with emotions that coax us toward adaptive choices." Thus it is, Pinker says, that "a new mother will first coolly assess the infant and her current situation and only in the next few days begin to see it as a unique and wonderful individual." (To which Michael Kelly, writing in the *Washington Post*, responded: "Yes, that was my wife all over, cool as a cucumber as she assessed whether to keep her first-born child or toss him out the window.") Not that those who opt for defenestration don't feel bad about it. Anthropological students of neonaticidal women in hunter-gatherer societies, Pinker reports, "discover that the women see the death as an unavoidable tragedy, grieve at the time, and remember the child with pain all their lives."

It is not just new mothers, Pinker suggests, who come equipped with the brain circuitry to countenance neonaticide. How else explain the leniency with which, he says, society deals with first-day baby killers? "Prosecutors sometimes don't prosecute; juries rarely convict; those found guilty almost never go to jail." Such leniency, Pinker goes on—driving now to the heart of his modest proposal—"forces us to think the unthinkable and ask if we, like many societies and like the mothers themselves, are not completely sure whether a neonate is a full person."

Our problem is that while we need "a clear boundary to confer personhood on a human being and grant it a right to life," we have a most difficult time, as the abortion debate reveals, marking that boundary. Up till now, Pinker concedes, most everyone has agreed that the line must be drawn no later than birth. But "neonaticide forces us to examine even that boundary." "To a biologist," he cheerily informs us, "birth is as arbitrary a milestone as any other."

Moral philosophers instruct us, Pinker says, that a right to life must come from "morally significant qualities that we humans happen to possess." "One such trait is having a unique sequence of experiences that defines us as individuals and connects us to other people. Other traits include an ability to reflect upon ourselves as a continuous locus of consciousness, to form and savor plans for the future, to dread death, and to express the choice not to die. And there's the rub: our immature neonates don't possess these traits any more than mice do." That being the case, Pinker reports, "several moral philosophers have concluded

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that neonates are not persons, and thus neonaticide should not be classified as murder." But most people, he concedes, flinch from following their brain circuitry to that logical endpoint.

"So how," Pinker wonders, "do you provide grounds for outlawing neonaticide?" The "facts," the reader by now is not surprised to learn, "don't make it easy." Some philosophers have argued, for example, "that people see neonates as so similar to older babies that you couldn't allow neonaticide without coarsening the way people treat children and other people in general." But again, "the facts say otherwise." Studies show, Pinker insists, "that neonaticidal women don't kill anyone but their newborns, and when they give birth later under better conditions, they can be devoted, loving mothers." So it is that "the baby killers turn out to be not moral monsters but nice, normal (and sometimes religious) young women."

By this point, Pinker's whole analysis would lead to the conclusion that neonaticide is not the "immoral act" he called it at the outset but rather, at worst, the "unavoidable tragedy" that the hunter-gatherer women endure. But at the brink, Pinker blinks. Just as the reader steels himself for a proposal for "infanticide reform," Pinker retreats to a dying fall. "We will probably never resolve" the dilemmas surrounding neonaticide, he lamely concludes. "We will most likely muddle through, keeping birth as a conspicuous legal boundary but showing mercy to the anguished girls who feel they had no choice but to run afoul of it." If I were one of those "anguished girls," I would feel justified in suing Pinker for breach of implied intellectual promise.

Just why Pinker pulls back from the brink one cannot tell. Perhaps because he recognizes that his argument has led him further than he originally intended. He wants to maintain a clear distinction between neonaticide and filicide. But consider the "morally significant traits" he invokes as necessary to a claim of a right to life: "a unique sequence of experiences that defines us as individuals and connects us to other people . . . an ability to reflect upon ourselves as a continuous locus of consciousness, to form and savor plans for the future, to dread death, and to express the choice not to die." Those are traits unavailable not just to mice and newborn babies, but to all people up to several years of age. From such a brink only a moral idiot would not pull back.

But no doubt future moral explorers will venture where Pinker, for now, fears to tread. That's the sort of thing that happens when you start "thinking the unthinkable." Which is a good reason for people possessed of moral common sense politely to refuse invitations to such thought experiments.

Abortion on demand, neonaticide, filicide. Next thing you know—to echo Everett Dirksen in a different context—you're talking real people. FT

Who Else?

(Psalm 147)

But the Lord rebuilds Jerusalem,
Collects the scattered, castoff, brokenhearted
Seed of Israel and knows how many
Stars there are, and calls them all
By name, and hears the answer.
We can't describe how music works
Or know the time of clouds, rain, mountain grass.
Cattle graze there, crows pick
Through what horses leave behind.
A rider, strong enough to pass through air
Needs more than skill to master fear.
When earth becomes Jerusalem, praise
Doors that keep the north wind out,
Your children warm inside, with bread, fruit
Of the plain unrolling thunder, tables
Where wool snow blankets ashes' frost
Nip hail sown buds of cold. A glance.
They melt, soft breezes streaming water.
Only we have heard it, and retell it.

Laurance Wieder

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Opinion

The Gorbachev of Darwinism

Phillip E. Johnson

Stephen Jay Gould is mad as hell, and he's not going to take it any more. Readers of the *New York Review of Books* learned that much in June 1997, when they read a lengthy, two-part tirade in which Gould attempted to settle scores with some of his more prominent enemies within the guild of Darwinists. The targets were Daniel Dennett, John Maynard Smith, Robert Wright, and especially, although largely in the background, Richard Dawkins. One cannot understand the controversy without sampling the level of vitriol, which may be judged by this salvo from Gould:

> [Dennett's] limited and superficial book reads like a caricature of a caricature—for if Richard Dawkins has trivialized Darwin's richness by adhering to the strictest form of adaptationist argument in a maximally reductionist mode, then Dennett, as Dawkins' publicist, manages to convert an already vitiated and improbable account into an even more simplistic and uncompromising doctrine. If history, as often noted, replays grandeurs as farces, and if T. H. Huxley truly acted as "Darwin's bulldog," then it is hard to resist thinking of Dennett, in this book, as "Dawkins' lapdog."

After going on in that vein for some pages, Gould responded with hurt feelings to Maynard Smith's published comment that "the evolutionary biologists with whom I have discussed [Gould's] work tend to see him as a man whose ideas are so confused as to be hardly worth bothering with, but as one who should not be publicly criticized because he is at least on our side against the creationists." To this Gould lamented that Maynard Smith used to say much nicer things about him and warned that "We will not win this most important of all battles [against the creationists] if we descend to the same tactics of backbiting and anathematization that characterize our true opponents." Tell that to Dawkins' lapdog.

Gould's decision to publish an all-out blast at the writers whom he calls "Darwinian Fundamentalists" escalated what his colleague Niles Eldredge has called the "high-table debate" among evolutionists. This is basically a struggle between the classical neo-Darwinists (represented most prominently by Dawkins) and the revisionists (headed by Gould himself), who follow the tradition of T. H. Huxley by advocating "evolution" while remaining cool towards Darwin's distinctive mechanism. It's a debate that has long been muted because of the mutual desire of the adversaries to avoid giving ammunition to the despised creationists, and even now the arguments are conducted in an obscure jargon worthy of *Pravda* in its heyday. But here's what it's all about.

In the early 1980s the British geneticist J. R. G. Turner remarked, with specific reference to the controversies swirling around Gould, that "Evolutionary biologists are all Darwinists, as all Christians follow Christ and all Communists, Karl Marx. The schisms are over which parts of the Master's teaching shall be seen as central." The canonical text for fans of natural selection is Darwin's eloquent statement in *The Origin of Species* that "natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinizing, throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life." Note the key elements: natural selection everywhere and at all times accepts or rejects all variations, however slight, and continually promotes the "improvement" of all organisms. Evolution of that kind, in the jargon of the trade, is called pan-selectionism.

The revisionist Gould calls that picture of ubiquitous selection "ultra-Darwinism" or "Darwinian fundamentalism," and he attributes it not to Darwin himself but to contemporary Darwinists like Dawkins and Dennett. Gould ignores Darwin's own pan-selectionist affirmations and quotes instead a passage from the sixth and final (1872) edition of the *Origin*. There Darwin remarked with some bitterness that critics had, by "steady misrepresentation," overlooked his qualification that "natural selection has been the main *but not the exclusive* means of modification" (emphasis added). Whether the qualification amounts to much is hard to say, since a few exceptions to an otherwise pervasive pattern of selectionism would be consistent with the modest disclaimer that natural selection is not literally "exclusive."

In any event, Gould accuses the ultra-Darwinists of preaching that "natural selection regulates everything of any importance in evolution, and that adaptation emerges as a universal result and ultimate test of selection's ubiquity." Against this fundamentalism Gould asserts his own "pluralism," which includes at least four non-adaptationist claims about evolution:

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(1) neutral genetic changes are a major aspect of evolution; (2) basic developmental pathways are highly conserved across otherwise disparate groups and hence impose constraints on adaptive change; (3) species remain unchanged for long periods and then branch apart in "geological moments" (a process Gould calls "punctuated equilibrium"); and (4) many or most extinctions have been due to catastrophic events rather than (as Darwin insisted) the gradual operation of ordinary selective pressures.

That's where the name-calling starts, because the classical Darwinists consider Gould's description of their position to be a preposterous caricature. Gould has a well-earned reputation for distorting the views of his rivals and adversaries, and it is not surprising to find that the complaints are justified. To my knowledge none of his targets disputes that neutral variations occur in plenty, that developmental pathways are conserved, that significant evolutionary change may occur in brief periods of time (geologically speaking) after longer periods of stasis, or that the dinosaurs were probably wiped out by a planetary catastrophe. Gould does deserve credit for advocating these sub-theories before they became popular, but nowadays everybody claims to be a pluralist.

For his own part, Gould does not deny the central tenet of the classicists—that adaptive complexity is due to the Darwinian mechanism of natural selection. In his own words, "Yes, eyes are for seeing and feet are for moving. And, yes again, I know of no scientific mechanism other than natural selection with the proven power to build structures of such eminently workable design." The creative power of natural selection is actually inferred from materialist philosophy, rather than proved by scientific evidence, but let that pass. If both sides agree that natural selection is responsible for adaptation, and also that natural selection isn't the whole story of evolution, then where is their disagreement? It is little wonder that many observers have concluded that there is no substance behind this food fight at the high table, but only a clash of overgrown egos.

In fact, however, the disagreement is substantive. The key to understanding it is to recognize that being a true Darwinist requires more than just giving lip service to natural selection before going on to something else, which is what Gould typically does. If natural selection actually made all those marvels of biological complexity, certain conclusions about the pace and manner of evolution necessarily follow, and Gould frequently seems to be denying those necessary conclusions. The dinosaurs can be killed off as rapidly as you like, but all the dinosaurs that died and all the new mammals that replaced them had to have been built up in the first place through the gradual accumulation of random mutations by natural selection. Likewise, the problem with neutral gene substitutions is not that anyone doubts they occur, but that neutral changes by definition do not help with the overwhelming task of building up the complex adaptations. Natural selection had to do that whole job, if God didn't do it, and that means natural selection had to be continuously active across vast stretches of geological time regardless of what the fossil record shows. That implies, among other things, that an enormous amount of evidence of the process has to be missing from the fossil record, but Gould frequently gives the impression that he thinks the evidence was never there.

One of the most notorious examples occurs in Gould's discussion of the Cambrian Explosion in his 1989 book *Wonderful Life*. The "Cambrian Explosion" is the sudden appearance of the major animal groups (phyla) in the rocks of the Cambrian era, without apparent ancestors. As Dawkins himself has put it, "It is as though they were just planted there, without any evolutionary history." Of course, Dawkins and all other Darwinists believe that this appearance is an illusion caused by the incompleteness of the record, and that a complete fossil record would show a universe of transitional forms and side branches, all having evolved by tiny steps from a single common ancestor. Gould raises a radically different possibility. He explains that there are two possible explanations for the absence of Precambrian ancestors: "the artifact theory (they did exist, but the fossil record hasn't preserved them), and the fast-transition theory (they really didn't exist, at least as complex invertebrates easily linked to their descendants)."

That final qualifying clause is a typical example of Gould's penchant for equivocation: *of course* the missing ancestors didn't exist in a form "easily linked to their descendants." That is why there is a problem, and why the artifact theory has to be true if Darwinism is true. Hence when Gould went on to proclaim that new discoveries had sounded "the death knell of the artifact theory," some readers understandably took him to be saying that the phyla really were just planted there without any evolutionary history, which amounts to saying that they were specially created. Gould assuredly could not have meant that, but then what exactly did he mean? Remember that saving Darwinism in the teeth of the Cambrian evidence requires not just assuming a few missing ancestors, easily linked to their descendants or not, but assuming a vast quantity of vanished transitional forms between the hypothetical single-celled ancestors and the vastly different multicellular invertebrates. If you are a Darwinist you know the necessary ancestors and transitionals had to exist, regardless of the lack of fossil evidence. If you doubt that their absence is an artifact of the fossil record, you are not a Darwinist.

The difficulty of saying whether Gould really is a Darwinist or not stems from his habit of combining radically anti-Darwinian statements with qualifications that preserve a line of retreat. When

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Gould loudly proclaimed "the return of the hopeful monster," for example, he seemed to be endorsing the geneticist Richard Goldschmidt's view that large mutations create new kinds of organisms in single-generation jumps—a heresy which Darwinists consider to be only a little better than outright creationism. If you read the fine print carefully, however, you'll find that Gould surrounded his claims with qualifications that allow him to insist that he is at least somewhere in the neighborhood of orthodoxy. Even when Gould bluntly announced that neo-Darwinism is "effectively dead," it turns out that he only meant . . . well, nobody seems to know what he meant, but certainly not that neo-Darwinism is effectively dead.

For years Darwinists like Maynard Smith gave Gould the benefit of the doubt, appreciating his genuine flair and his willingness to fight the common enemy. At last they have become thoroughly exasperated with his "now you see it, now you don't" practice of vaguely affirming Darwinism while specifically denying its necessary implications. Gould will only have exacerbated their disgust with his latest outburst.

Gould's uncomfortable situation reminds me of the self-created predicament of Mikhail Gorbachev in the last years of the Soviet Empire. Gorbachev recognized that something had gone wrong with the Communist system, but thought that the system itself could be preserved if it was reformed. His democratic friends warned him that the Marxist fundamentalists would inevitably turn against him, but he was unwilling to endanger his position in the ruling elite by following his own logic to its necessary conclusion. Gould, like Gorbachev, deserves immense credit for bringing glasnost to a closed society of dogmatists. And, like Gorbachev, he lives on as a sad reminder of what happens to those who lack the nerve to make a clean break with a dying theory.

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"Intelligent Television"

John J. Reilly

This season's most controversial new program, *Nothing Sacred,* is about everyday life at an urban Catholic parish. At any rate, it is about everyday life as refracted through the multi-layered narrative techniques used in *ER* and its progeny: handheld cameras, several subplots running at once, and lots of characters on-screen. (The soup kitchen at this parish has as many patrons as the chow-line in the film epic *Spartacus.*) Considering what might conservatively be called the adventurous attitude that ABC and its parent Disney Corporation have taken toward cultural issues in the past few years, it was never likely that *Nothing Sacred* would provide many ringing affirmations of Catholic orthodoxy. Even before its premiere, the show raised quite a lot of dudgeon among the defenders of the Church. In any case, the show's ratings have been so dismal that any assessment of the theology of *Nothing Sacred* is soon likely to be purely academic. Still, the experiment does seem to have taught one lesson. We now know, from no less an authority than the Nielsen ratings, that reactionary liberalism has no audience.

Nothing Sacred is like the joke about the old dog that was still fit enough to chase female dogs but too old to remember why. The basic template seems to be the movie *Mass Appeal* and similar stories that feature a progressive young priest who shakes up a parish grown frowzy with social respectability and outdated dogma. The protagonist in this series is indeed a reasonably young priest—Father Ray (Francis Xavier Rayneaux)—who is impatient of obstacles to his good intentions. The problem is that the door he's trying to kick in is already open. No one objects to his ideas, which in any case tend to get lost in the banter. The senior priest in the parish is a sardonic old geezer who gives the young Turk amused encouragement, punctuated by ironic references to the old days, when people used to believe in Hell. There are occasional ominous references to The Bishop, but he is a distant and alien figure with no real influence over what goes on at the parish. The series has been praised, perhaps rightly, for showing that life in a rectory is more often concerned with practical matters, like running a soup kitchen, than with abstract theological issues. What *Nothing Sacred* fails to show, however, is why the staff should not forget this parish nonsense and just run the soup kitchen.

The parish church in the show does not teach orthodox doctrine. It does not teach liberal doctrine. It does not teach any doctrine at all. A running gag is the uselessness and tedium of Sunday homilies. (Maureen Dowd of the *New York Times* wickedly suggested that its moral latitudinarianism was the work of the show's Jesuit advisers.) The premiere episode dealt in part with a young woman who brings a tape recorder into the young priest's confessional and asks him for the Church's view of abortion. In answer, he states neither the Church's teaching nor the views of the many dissenters. What he does come out with is something along the lines of "You're an adult and I cannot live your life for you." Lest we miss the point, the end of the episode shows the young woman pleading with the old priest to give her some sure answers—but he remains significantly silent.

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The really odd thing is that a program Ms. Dowd labeled "intelligent television" should take such pains to keep the intelligence to itself. Certainly you learn nothing about Catholicism from watching the program, and one would be tempted to dismiss *Nothing Sacred* as merely high-concept puff ball, were it not for its Social Gospel mean streak.

The old priest says at one point, "What goes on in the basement [the soup kitchen] is why the Masses make sense." Certainly the basement is where all the moral fervor seems to have leaked. Now, running a soup kitchen (or a shelter) is not for the timid. If you want to run one in a church in a residential neighborhood, you are going to have to pay careful attention to the neighbors' concerns about crime and sanitation and property values. Some of these worries will be exaggerated, some will be well-founded. The enterprise will require diplomacy and pragmatism. In the case of *Nothing Sacred*, however, this is where the old dog remembers why he runs.

Maybe *ER*-style directing does not lend itself to nuance. In any case, a local man in an early episode, a lawyer no less, is so ill-advised as to raise some objections to bringing hundreds of strange people into the neighborhood every day. The young priest lets into him like a chainsaw. The lawyer's objections are dismissed as bigotry and greed (he sells property to "yuppie scum," as Father Ray unpastorally calls them), and become the occasion for a tirade on the persistence of poverty. This speech was delivered in the sacred soup kitchen, but many Catholics have heard it from the pulpit. Not a small percentage, one suspects, left church that Sunday thinking about joining some denomination where it is easier for the congregation to fire stupid clergymen.

Programs with religious themes are proliferating on network television, many of them dealing with the adventures of clergy and their families. Most of these shows seem to be set somewhere in suburban Televisionland, and I suppose the creators of *Nothing Sacred* should be given credit for presenting what they imagined was a more realistic offering. Nevertheless, the show does a grave disservice. The Catholicism it portrays is so contentless as to kill any interest that non-Catholics might have had in the Church—unless they're looking for a convenient place to practice social work.

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Coming in February:

George Weigel

"JOHN PAUL II AND THE PRIORITY OF CULTURE"

Letter from Moscow

Lawrence A. Uzzell

On June 24, 1997, the Vatican made a mistake in political judgment. Pope John Paul II sent a letter to Boris Yeltsin, President of Russia, that was intended to help block passage of new legislation restricting the rights of religious minorities but that, in the long run, helped insure that legislation's success. The letter signaled to the Russian authorities that they could split the Roman Catholics off from the various Protestant minorities that also opposed the legislation. It also showed the Russians just how to do this by making mostly symbolic concessions, yielding as little of substance as possible. Partly as a result of this mistake, Russia has now enacted its most serious legislative rollback in human rights since the end of the Soviet Union.

When the Pope sent his letter, the original bill on the matter had already passed the lower house of the Russian parliament and was about to be rubber-stamped by the upper house. The last barrier to its passage was a presidential veto, which at that point seemed highly unlikely. Though Yeltsin himself had yet to take a public stand on it, some of the bill's most active supporters were officials in his executive branch. The domestic pressures for it, especially from a new alliance of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow and the Communist leaders of parliament, were far greater than those against it. Without the firm stance of Russia's major Western Christian minorities against the bill, backed by pressure from the Pope and from other foreign sources such as the U.S. government and the European Union, Yeltsin would almost certainly not have issued the veto he did in late July.

The president soon came under heavier than expected pressure to reverse course. The Moscow Patriarchate, normally docile toward the Kremlin, proved ferocious in lobbying for the power to suppress its competitors. Yeltsin promised to produce a compromise, and his staff invited representatives of the country's major religious confessions to negotiate one. The key Kremlin staffer assigned to this task, however, turned out to be Andrei Loginov, who had actively lobbied for the original bill.

By September it was clear that the negotiations were a smokescreen, that neither Patriarch Aleksi II nor Loginov had any intention of accepting major changes in their earlier handiwork. The only hope of defeating the bill was to derail the so-called compromise and provoke a parliamentary vote to

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override the president's veto of the original bill. Yeltsin might then have been pushed to keep his July promise to call on the Constitutional Court to invalidate the measure. Both the vetoed bill and the September "compromise" blatantly contradict Russia's 1993 constitution, and a truly independent court would not hesitate to invalidate either. But Russia's top courts are largely in Yeltsin's pocket, and far less likely to strike down a law supported by the president than one enacted by parliament over his veto.

The only way to maintain the pressure on Yeltsin was for the coalition opposing the bill, both within Russia and abroad, to hold firm. It did not. Of the minority faiths taking part in the Kremlin negotiations, the first to cave in, at the end of August, was the one with the strongest bargaining position and the most power to mobilize worldwide pressure, the Catholics. They were soon followed by the Baptists, and then the Pentecostals and Adventists. All eventually reversed themselves, but by then the bill's momentum was unstoppable.

The first sign of weakness in the Catholics' position had appeared in June with the Pope's letter. Instead of emphasizing the bill's threat to the rights of all religious minorities, John Paul focused almost exclusively on the Catholics—and especially on one particular element of the threat, far from the most important.

Contrary to some of the earlier, more superficial media coverage of the legislation, the bill's key provisions do not distinguish between religions—such as Catholicism and Orthodoxy—but between "religious associations" such as individual parishes and dioceses. These provisions discriminate in favor of those religious associations that were legally registered under the Soviet state fifteen years ago and against those that were founded more recently or that existed only illegally or semi-legally during the Soviet years. Thus, for example, the favored category includes many Baptist congregations—those which were willing during the pre-glasnost years to make the compromises needed to get official registration. Many Orthodox congregations, by contrast, are not in that category—including nearly all those not affiliated with the mainstream Moscow Patriarchate. Groups not in the favored category are denied rights to engage in such basic ministries as education and publishing. In effect the legislation retroactively legitimizes, and partly restores, the church-state relations of the Brezhnev era.

The Catholics have only two parishes in all of the Russian Federation that were legally registered and functioning fifteen years ago. With the passage of the new law, every other Catholic institution in the country—including about one hundred parishes in European Russia, another sixty beyond the Urals, and the diocesan administrations based in Moscow and Novosibirsk—has now been reduced to second-class status. For example, they now have no guaranteed legal right even to distribute free tracts or booklets inside their own churches. The seminary in St. Petersburg, all Catholic publishing and broadcasting activities, and the Russian branches of orders such as the Jesuits can now simply be shut down unless the Russian state decides not to carry out its own law.

No one expects the new law to be fully enforced, but the mere threat of being able to do so gives the Russian authorities all the power they need to harass and intimidate. Existing Catholic institutions will probably be allowed to continue their activities, but it will almost certainly become harder to open parishes in towns that do not now have them. Local authorities were already creating artificial barriers to such parish growth before the new law was passed—even in towns with large communities of ethnic Poles or Germans, and even when such towns still have nineteenth-century Catholic church buildings, or the ruins of them, seized by the Bolsheviks and still not returned.

Thus the slow, painful work of rebuilding pre-1917 Catholic parish life in Russia will now become even slower. The position of Protestants will probably be worse—especially those Protestants whose ecclesiological doctrines make it difficult for them to join "centralized religious organizations" of the type favored by the new law.

Faced with these threats to religious freedom, the Pope's advisers drafted the June letter, which focused not on the proposed law's substantive provisions but on its preamble. In its June version, the preamble specifically listed four world religions as "traditionally existing" in Russia and as "respected" by the Russian state: Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. The Catholics wanted to be added to that list, and their negotiators in Moscow spent a disproportionate amount of their energy pursuing that goal. They failed. All they achieved was the addition of "Christianity," in a bizarre formulation that makes Orthodoxy look like something separate from Christianity.

Though the preamble has no direct legal force, it was worth fighting over. Local officials will often be reluctant to read beyond the preamble, so the symbolic issue is more important than it would be if Russia were truly a law-governed state. But it is far from the law's most important part, and certainly not so important as to justify the Catholics' comparative neglect of such other issues as its refusal to acknowledge religious organizations registered less than fifteen years ago.

At least one major Catholic participant understood this. Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, head of the diocesan administration for European Russia based in Moscow, wanted to resist all the provisions of the legislation that would deny his parishes their basic rights to preach and teach publicly, rights supposedly guaranteed by Russia's constitution. But his

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sister was involved in a tragic accident and that took him away during the most critical period, August 28 to September 6.

During those nine days the archbishop's young diocesan chancellor reached oral agreement with the Kremlin over a "compromise" bill whose final text had yet to be written. The papal nuncio and the Catholic bishop of Novosibirsk, both in Moscow during this period, endorsed the agreement. The Baptist Union threw its support to the still-unwritten bill on September 1. (Unlike the Catholics, the old-line Baptist leaders actually stand to gain in some ways from the new system since it will pressure independent Protestant congregations to join "centralized religious organizations" more than fifteen years old, such as the Baptist Union.)

The increasingly isolated Pentecostals and Adventists took a more ambiguous position: On September 2, bowing to the Kremlin's pressure, they agreed to sign a mysterious document that called on the parliament not to override the president's veto of the original bill. They were not allowed to keep copies of this document; it became clear why when the Kremlin and the state-controlled media immediately proclaimed that the minority faiths had now expressed their support of the new compromise bill, even though that bill still did not exist in its final form. On September 4 the Kremlin finally produced a written text of the new bill and sent it to the parliament as Yeltsin's official proposal.

On September 8, the first working day after his return to Moscow, Archbishop Kondrusiewicz wrote a letter to Yeltsin opposing the new bill. After the Pentecostals and Adventists finally saw the exact text of the compromise, they issued a joint statement with the Catholics opposing it, a statement the Baptists later joined. But the minority confessions were slow to act: Their statement was released only on September 11, nearly two weeks after the first Kremlin-planted news stories proclaiming a consensus for the compromise.

The Vatican was also slow, doing little to counter the Kremlin's disinformation. When the bill reached the floor of the parliament on September 19, many in both Russia and the West were still under the impression that it had Catholic and Protestant support. The European Union, which had lobbied quietly but firmly against the bill in July, was nearly passive in September. With Western opposition muted, Yeltsin signed the bill into law on September 26.

Should Catholics defend only their own rights, not those of other Christian minorities in Russia? Should they decline to defend vigorously even their own rights in the hope that appeasing the most anti-Western and neo-Bolshevik elements in today's Russian Orthodox Church will bring closer the day of Christian unity? Only if the answer to both questions is "Yes" can the Moscow Catholic negotiators' behavior in the summer of 1997 be justified.

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Latent Image

Chosen, all prepared
the vista no one else perceives
in a shuttersbreath of light
is born.

In the dark room, well timed
the image no one else has seen
in a burning bath of light
is born again.

Anne McKinley

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The Gift of Salvation

In the spring of 1994, a distinguished group of Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants issued a much-discussed statement, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium" (FT, May 1994). That statement, commonly referred to as "ECT," noted a growing "convergence and cooperation" between Evangelicals and Catholics in many public tasks, and affirmed agreement in basic articles of Christian faith while also underscoring the continuing existence of important differences. The signers promised to engage those differences in continuing conversations, and this has been done in meetings of noted theologians convened by Mr. Charles Colson and Father Richard John Neuhaus. At a meeting in the fall of 1996, it was determined that further progress depended upon firm agreement on the meaning of salvation, and especially the doctrine of justification. After much discussion, study, and prayer over the course of a year, the following statement was agreed to at a meeting in New York City, October 6-7, 1997. The convenors and participants express their gratitude to Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, for his very active support throughout this process. In future conversations they intend to address the outstanding questions noted at the end of this statement.

— The Editors

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

— John 3:16-17

We give thanks to God that in recent years many Evangelicals and Catholics, ourselves among them, have been able to express a common faith in Christ and so to acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We confess together one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; we confess Jesus Christ the Incarnate Son of God; we affirm the binding authority of Holy Scripture, God's inspired Word; and we acknowledge the Apostles' and Nicene creeds as faithful witnesses to that Word.

The effectiveness of our witness for Christ depends upon the work of the Holy Spirit, who calls and empowers us to confess together the meaning of the salvation promised and accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Through prayer and study of Holy Scripture, and aided by the Church's reflection on the sacred text from earliest times, we have found that, notwithstanding some persistent and serious differences, we can together bear witness to the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. To this saving gift we now testify, speaking not for, but from and to, our several communities.

God created us to manifest his glory and to give us eternal life in fellowship with himself, but our disobedience intervened and brought us under condemnation. As members of the fallen human race, we come into the world estranged from God and in a state of rebellion. This original sin is compounded

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by our personal acts of sinfulness. The catastrophic consequences of sin are such that we are powerless to restore the ruptured bonds of union with God. Only in the light of what God has done to restore our fellowship with him do we see the full enormity of our loss. The gravity of our plight and the greatness of God's love are brought home to us by the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

God the Creator is also God the Redeemer, offering salvation to the world. "God desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). The restoration of communion with God is absolutely dependent upon Jesus Christ, true God and true man, for he is "the one mediator between God and men" (1 Timothy 2:5), and "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). He is the holy and righteous one who was put to death for our sins, "the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

The New Testament speaks of salvation in various ways. Salvation is ultimate or eschatological rescue from sin and its consequences, the final state of safety and glory to which we are brought in both body and soul. "Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God." "Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed" (Romans 5:9, 13:11). Salvation is also a present reality. We are told that "he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy" (Titus 3:5). The present reality of salvation is an anticipation and foretaste of salvation in its promised fullness.

Always it is clear that the work of redemption has been accomplished by Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). Scripture describes the consequences of Christ's redemptive work in several ways, among which are: justification, reconciliation, restoration of friendship with God, and rebirth from above by which we are adopted as children of God and made heirs of the Kingdom. "When the time had fully come, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

Justification is central to the scriptural account of salvation, and its meaning has been much debated between Protestants and Catholics. We agree that justification is not earned by any good works or merits of our own; it is entirely God's gift, conferred through the Father's sheer graciousness, out of the love that he bears us in his Son, who suffered on our behalf and rose from the dead for our justification. Jesus was "put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). In justification, God, on the basis of Christ's righteousness alone, declares us to be no longer his rebellious enemies but his forgiven friends, and by virtue of his declaration it is so.

The New Testament makes it clear that the gift of justification is received through faith. "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). By faith, which is also the gift of God, we repent of our sins and freely adhere to the Gospel, the good news of God's saving work for us in Christ. By our response of faith to Christ, we enter into the blessings promised by the Gospel. Faith is not merely intellectual assent but an act of the whole person, involving the mind, the will, and the affections, issuing in a changed life. We understand that what we here affirm is in agreement with what the Reformation traditions have meant by justification by faith alone (*sola fide*).

In justification we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, through whom the love of God is poured forth into our hearts (Romans 5:5). The grace of Christ and the gift of the Spirit received through faith (Galatians 3:14) are experienced and expressed in diverse ways by different Christians and in different Christian traditions, but God's gift is never dependent upon our human experience or our ways of expressing that experience.

While faith is inherently personal, it is not a purely private possession but involves participation in the body of Christ. By baptism we are visibly incorporated into the community of faith and committed to a life of discipleship. "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

By their faith and baptism, Christians are bound to live according to the law of love in obedience to Jesus Christ the Lord. Scripture calls this the life of holiness, or sanctification. "Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). Sanctification is not fully accomplished at the beginning of our life in Christ, but is progressively furthered as we struggle, with God's grace and help, against adversity and temptation. In this struggle we are assured that Christ's grace will be sufficient for us, enabling us to persevere to the end. When we fail, we can still turn to God in humble repentance and confidently ask for, and receive, his forgiveness.

We may therefore have assured hope for the eternal life promised to us in Christ. As we have shared in his sufferings, we will share in his final glory. "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). While we dare not presume upon the grace of God, the

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promise of God in Christ is utterly reliable, and faith in that promise overcomes anxiety about our eternal future. We are bound by faith itself to have firm hope, to encourage one another in that hope, and in such hope we rejoice. For believers "through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

Thus it is that as justified sinners we have been saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved. All this is the gift of God. Faith issues in a confident hope for a new heaven and a new earth in which God's creating and redeeming purposes are gloriously fulfilled. "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

As believers we are sent into the world and commissioned to be bearers of the good news, to serve one another in love, to do good to all, and to evangelize everyone everywhere. It is our responsibility and firm resolve to bring to the whole world the tidings of God's love and of the salvation accomplished in our crucified, risen, and returning Lord. Many are in grave peril of being eternally lost because they do not know the way to salvation.

In obedience to the Great Commission of our Lord, we commit ourselves to evangelizing everyone. We must share the fullness of God's saving truth with all, including members of our several communities. Evangelicals must speak the Gospel to Catholics and Catholics to Evangelicals, always speaking the truth in love, so that "working hard to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . . the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God" (Ephesians 4:3, 12-13).

Moreover, we defend religious freedom for all. Such freedom is grounded in the dignity of the human person created in the image of God, and must be protected also in civil law.

We must not allow our witness as Christians to be compromised by halfhearted discipleship or needlessly divisive disputes. While we rejoice in the unity we have discovered and are confident of the fundamental truths about the gift of salvation we have affirmed, we recognize that there are necessarily interrelated questions that require further and urgent exploration. Among such questions are these: the meaning of baptismal regeneration, the Eucharist, and sacramental grace; the historic uses of the language of justification as it relates to imputed and transformative righteousness; the normative status of justification in relation to all Christian doctrine; the assertion that while justification is by faith alone, the faith that receives salvation is never alone; diverse understandings of merit, reward, purgatory, and indulgences; Marian devotion and the assistance of the saints in the life of salvation; and the possibility of salvation for those who have not been evangelized.

On these and other questions, we recognize that there are also some differences within both the Evangelical and Catholic communities. We are committed to examining these questions further in our continuing conversations. All who truly believe in Jesus Christ are brothers and sisters in the Lord and must not allow their differences, however important, to undermine this great truth, or to deflect them from bearing witness together to God's gift of salvation in Christ. "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

As Evangelicals who thank God for the heritage of the Reformation and affirm with conviction its classic confessions, as Catholics who are conscientiously faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church, and as disciples together of the Lord Jesus Christ who recognize our debt to our Christian forebears and our obligations to our contemporaries and those who will come after us, we affirm our unity in the Gospel that we have here professed. In our continuing discussions, we seek no unity other than unity in the truth. Only unity in the truth can be pleasing to the Lord and Savior whom we together serve, for he is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). FT

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The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium

Evangelizing and Reevangelizing Latin America With—Not Against—One Another

Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy

In October 1997, immediately following the meeting of evangelical Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians who agreed on the foregoing statement, "The Gift of Salvation," North American Evangelicals and Catholics met with Catholic bishops from Latin America, led by Archbishop Oscar Rodriguez, president of CELAM, the council of Latin American bishops conferences. The meeting was convened by Mr. Charles Colson and Father Richard John Neuhaus, and was opened by John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York. The following presentation was made by Edward Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

— The Editors

The great challenge facing the Christian churches today is how to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the men and women of our times and of the approaching new millennium. It is for this reason that we hear a great deal about evangelization, reevangelization, and new evangelization. The task of evangelizing is not something new for the Church, but the actual challenge is new, since the circumstances in which this task is to be carried out today differ radically from those of earlier times.

We cannot speak of this challenge without also bringing into our discussions the question of ecumenism, the search for unity among Christians. It is significant that the modern ecumenical movement began in the first World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910, when an international group of Protestants and Anglicans assembled to discuss ways of cooperating rather than competing in the work of mission.

The prayer for the unity of his disciples which Our Lord Jesus Christ addressed to the Father on the night before he suffered—*that they may all be one*—makes it clear that this unity is essentially linked to the mission of bringing salvation to all peoples: *so that the world may believe that you have sent me* (John 17:21).

The Second Vatican Council considered "the restoration of unity among all Christians" to be "one of its principal concerns," and said of the division among the followers of the one Lord Jesus Christ that it "openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages that most holy cause, the preaching of the Gospel to every creature." To the nonbeliever it would seem, says the Council document *Unitatis Redintegratio*, "as if Christ himself were divided."

Hence evangelization and ecumenism should go hand in hand. But that has not always been the case, nor is it always so today. At the beginning of the present century the churches were certainly much more interested in maintaining their own separate position in the world and where possible increasing their membership, even if that meant conversion to their community from other churches and ecclesial communities. In many places there was a deep hostil-

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ity between churches, an inheritance of the tragic disputes and wars of previous centuries. In his apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, Pope John Paul II speaks about that "painful chapter of history to which the sons and daughters of the Church must return with a spirit of repentance" when acquiescence was given, "especially in certain centuries, *to intolerance and even the use of violence* in the service of truth." The Inquisition is one example of this on the part of the Catholic Church, and there are similar examples on the part of other Christian churches and ecclesial communions.

Much progress has been made in the second half of this century in establishing a new type of relationship among Christians. Pope John Paul II has characterized the fruits of the efforts to restore unity among the followers of Christ as *brotherhood rediscovered*. There is no doubt that we have moved away from a spirit of confrontation to one of dialogue, and as a result there is today an aspiration among Christians for much greater unity.

The Second Vatican Council, in the Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, urged Catholics to "joyfully acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments from our common heritage which are to be found among other Christian communions." It is right and salutary, the Council affirmed, "to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ, sometimes even to the shedding of their blood."

Pope John Paul II takes up this same thought in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (That They May Be One): "The relationships which the members of the Catholic Church have established with other Christians since the Council have enabled us to discover what God is bringing about in members of other churches and ecclesial communities. . . . A vast new field has thus opened up for the whole ecumenical experience." And referring to the immense number of those who in this century gave the ultimate witness of martyrdom, Pope John Paul II affirms: "Such a joint witness of holiness, as fidelity to the one Lord, has an ecumenical potentiality rich in grace."

This does not mean that our search has come to an end. There are many places in the world where we still find much tension between the churches. Russia is a prime example, and there are many others. Latin America, as we all know, is certainly not free of such tension. In fact, the Catholic Churches in Latin America find themselves often in a not dissimilar situation to the Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe. The Catholic bishops see the situation as one in which their faithful are being stolen, while those accused of this theft are convinced that they are simply bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to those who have not had the Gospel adequately preached to them. There are, on the one hand, accusations of insensitivity to the presence of long-standing Christian communities and charges of proselytism, while, on the other hand, there are countercharges of persecution or denial of religious freedom.

This is not an easy situation with simple solutions. The Catholic Church has evangelized Latin America over a period of five hundred years. It has established the Christian Church in that continent. Missionaries have given their lives to bring the Gospel to the natives of these lands. Huge resources in manpower and money have been invested. Through the centuries the Catholic Church has played an important role in the life of the people, a role that has extended far beyond the walls of local congregations, permeating every aspect of the culture—from art, to music, to social institutions, to festivals and other public celebrations. Within a few years, the Catholics of Latin America will make up 50 percent of the members of the Catholic Church throughout the world.

It would be dangerous, however, for the Catholic Church to put too much emphasis on past accomplishments. It can be assumed that a culture remains permeated by faith when that is in fact no longer true. In any case, it is obvious that much evangelization remains to be done among the peoples of Latin America. The questions is: Who is to do it? Thus the title of my remarks: "The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium: Evangelizing and Reevangelizing Latin America With—Not Against—One Another. "

It seems to me that there are some fundamental principles that should be taken into consideration in interchurch relations in such places as Eastern Europe or Latin America, principles by which we might avoid conflict and move towards evangelization in an ecumenical spirit.

1. It is surely just that the church that has evangelized a country or people should be held in respect by others who come later on the scene. This sense of respect would seem to require that newcomers not target for their evangelizing work the active, baptized members of the church that has been responsible for the original evangelization, and that they seek to enter into contact and dialogue with those who have preceded them.

2. It should be taken as a fundamental principle that every person has the right to belong to one or another church or ecclesial communion according to his or her conscience, provided of course that a decision to leave one community for another is made in true freedom and for the proper motives.

3. Every church or ecclesial communion should be able to bear witness to the Gospel. Indeed it is hard to imagine a church or similar Christian body that does not have an obligation to do just that. Consequently, every church or ecclesial communion should have the right to accept into its membership those who in con-

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science decide that they belong there. It should not automatically be concluded that such a transfer is the result of proselytism. It is, after all, much more important that a person find salvation in Christ than that he or she belong without conviction to any particular community.

Let me note in this regard a statement taken from a special report of the Joint Working Group between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches on the question of proselytism: "Religious freedom affirms the right of all persons to pursue the truth and witness to the truth according to their conscience. This includes the freedom to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the freedom of Christians to witness to their faith in him by word and deed."

4. It is important, however, that the preaching of the Gospel be free from any taint of proselytism—by which I mean the use of unworthy means to attract members of other churches or even unchurched persons to their fold. Misrepresentation of the other, or of one's own community, is a common source of tension. Some of the tension between churches comes from the way in which new converts to one community denigrate their former ecclesial home. Unfortunately, these converts are often the most bitter enemies of the religious family to which they once belonged.

In considering these suggested guidelines, it would be good to keep in mind an orientation given to the Catholic Church by the Second Vatican Council, which declared in *Unitatis Redintegratio* that we should not "forget that whatever is wrought by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our Christian brothers and sisters can contribute to our own edification. Whatever is truly Christian never conflicts with the genuine interests of the faith; indeed it can always result in a more ample realization of the very mystery of Christ and the Church." Let us remember that the Lord has not given his missionaries and evangelists a dispensation from the commandment to love one another. Hence the legitimate proclamation of the Gospel should bear the marks of Christian love as we find them enumerated by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13.

I believe that Evangelicals and Catholics have a particular responsibility in this connection. Very often in the past these two communities—and they are today the two largest Christian communities in the world—looked upon each other with such suspicion, distrust, and even hostility that the very Christian authenticity of the other was questioned. At times one has been presented by the other in ways that completely distorted its identity. These misunderstandings and conflicts have left a painful heritage.

It is for this reason that, as President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, I have been encouraged by recent attempts to bring Evangelicals and Catholics into dialogue. I know that this has not been, and is not even now, an easy task, nor is it seen sympathetically by all in either community. Yet Catholics and Evangelicals live side-by-side today in all of America and they will continue to do so in the coming century. Are they to do so in peace or in conflict? Are they to evangelize "one against the other" or "with one another"? How can we help to make the second of these choices the reality? For whether we wish it or not, a choice has to be made.

There is no doubt that Evangelicals and Catholics have begun to find themselves on the same side in many of the great public debates of the present day in the United States and elsewhere. In such places, all churches are under attack, for God Himself is under attack. The Christian civilization upon which both the north and the south of this hemisphere have been built is itself under attack. The July 4, 1997 statement by Catholic, Evangelical, and Orthodox leaders, "We Hold These Truths," shows just how deep is the crisis in the United States—but similar situations are common elsewhere. This is a cultural war in which Catholics and Evangelicals find themselves with a common cause, the cause of Christ against a new paganism.

This does not mean, of course, that Evangelicals and Catholics have overcome all their doctrinal differences or that their understanding of the Gospel and of the Christian message has suddenly become identical. For Catholics, it is a part of our faith that "it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone . . . that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*). New doctrinal understandings have been forthcoming and differences have been clarified, but no one claims that we have reached the kind of unity we would like to achieve. For that reason we will surely continue to evangelize according to our beliefs. What we look forward to is rather a way of carrying out this mission with respect one for the other, according to principles similar to those I have suggested. It means above all that we not direct our mission against the other, but seek to preach Christ and draw to him those who continue to wander in the darkness of sin and disbelief.

As I have said, this is a very delicate matter and certainly not an easy task. The fact that we are here to consider it is, however, most encouraging. I look forward with you all to these days together in the hope that we may be able to contribute something towards bringing about a new spirit of cooperation between Catholics and Evangelicals in Latin America, for the good of the societies there and effectively to further the task of the new evangelization that challenges us as we move forward into the next Christian millennium. FT

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The Constitution of Babel

Steven D. Smith

These are the times, as recent issues of this journal reflect, for reassessing our constitutional tradition, and current constitutional decisions and discussions are a good place to start. But a perceptive observer will immediately notice a puzzling, almost schizophrenic quality in modern constitutional discourse.

On the one hand, jurists and scholars declare, proudly and often, that constitutional discourse is the quintessential manifestation of reason in politics. Purporting to call the nation to order regarding the most divisive moral issue of our time, Supreme Court Justices explain that we should take their view of abortion in the 1992 *Casey* decision as definitive because it is based on "reasoned judgment." John Rawls confirms the Justices' assumption: "The Court's special role makes it the exemplar of public reason." Ronald Dworkin celebrates a "fusion of constitutional law and moral theory."

At the same time, constitutional scholars from all points on the political spectrum acknowledge an escalating irrationality in the constitutional conversation. Speaking from the left, Harvard's Duncan Kennedy describes Supreme Court decisions as the product of "the bizarre impact of self-delusion on the implementation of the political agenda by the judge." Daniel Farber, a moderate and pragmatic constitutional scholar at the University of Minnesota, finds the decisions "increasingly arid, formalistic, and lacking in intellectual value." Farber's colleague Michael Paulsen is more conservative and also more pungent: The Court's opinions are "pseudo-sophisticated legalese," "arid, technical, unhelpful, boring, . . . unintelligible," and "formulaic gobbledygook." Noting "increasing signs of intellectual incoherence" in constitutional decisions, H. Jefferson Powell of Duke concludes that Supreme Court pronouncements are less an expression of reason than a manifestation of "violence [that is] increasingly wayward, increasingly brutal."

Perceptions of proliferating irrationality are not good for morale, so it should not be surprising that constitutional discourse seems to be experiencing a kind of malaise. A friend who has been teaching a course on constitutional law for a couple of decades and has achieved a national reputation confided recently that he plans to stop teaching the course; there just isn't any integrity to the subject, and it becomes almost a degrading experience to have to teach, say, equal protection doctrine and pretend that the Court's decisions are the product of any sort of coherent thinking. Students in constitutional law courses increasingly echo the Critical Legal Studies slogan from the last decade: It's all "just politics." One student wrote on an exam in one of my courses: "The only essential skill needed to understand the Supreme Court's constitutional decisions is the ability to count to five." In this atmosphere, mandarin disquisitions on hermeneutical theory or political-moral philosophy bequeathed to us by our elders come to seem no longer elegantly erudite, but instead weirdly comic.

In short, constitutional discourse today appears both as a stately expression of reason and as the shabby antithesis of anything that could plausibly be called rational. How to account for this schizophrenic condition?

We might start by remembering that the familiar claim that constitutional law is the embodiment of reason is not a new one. A similar claim was made earlier by, among others, the American Founders. In the first paragraph of the first essay of *The Federalist Papers*, Alexander Hamilton intro-

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duced the basic theme: "It seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from *reflection* and *choice*, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on *accident* and *force*." James Wilson told the Pennsylvania ratifying convention that in the six thousand years since the creation, "the United States exhibit to the world the first instance . . . of a nation . . . assembling voluntarily, deliberating fully, and deciding calmly concerning the system of government under which they wish that they and their posterity should live." Cass Sunstein's recent assertion that "the Constitution established, *for the first time*, a republic of reasons" may sound recklessly self-congratulatory—What about Periclean Athens? Ciceronian Rome? The common law government of Bacon, Coke, and Hale?—but the statement resonates with much that was said in the founding generation.

But what would it mean to have a Constitution based on reason? Indeed, what *is* "reason"? These are large questions, but for the moment, we can notice one persistent feature of modern conceptions of reason. In *Reason and Culture*, a book seeking to defend reason against contemporary attacks, Ernest Gellner explains:

> One of the central themes, perhaps indeed the central obsession, of Cartesian rationalism is the aspiration for autonomy. There is the overwhelming desire for a kind of self-creation, for bringing forth a self and a world not simply taken over from an unexamined, accidental, contingent inheritance. Rationalism is the philosophy of the New Broom. Man makes himself, and he does so *rationally*.

A commitment to autonomy or self-creation distinguished the constitutional project from the beginning. All previous governments, the Founders sometimes suggested, had been the product of accident, force, or fraud. Machiavelli had reported the common opinion that "worldly events are so governed by fortune and by God that men cannot by their prudence change them, . . . and for this they may judge it to be useless to toil much about them, but let things be ruled by chance." It was this same dark foe—as Henry Adams would later put it, "the harsh brutality of chance"—that the American Founders hoped to domesticate through the application of reason. So they set out to do in action what over two millennia earlier Plato's *Republic* had attempted to do in words: create a political constitution virtually from scratch on the basis of self-conscious deliberation.

Of course, the Founders' understanding of "autonomy," and hence of "reason," differed in critical respects from more modern notions associated with those terms. Americans of the founding generation believed unreservedly in a divinely instituted natural order. "Natural rights" were grounded in this order, and the purpose of politics was to discern and conform to the preestablished design. So autonomy exercised in accord with reason meant something like freeing yourself from corrupt traditions and "thinking for yourself" so as better to conform to the providential plan.

In more modern thinking, by contrast, these ideas may seem a bit quaint, if not positively offensive. Having noisily rebelled against Tradition and Authority, it may seem, the founding generation still groveled before God—or at least before God's supposed product, Nature. By contrast, the notions of a providential design, or of a normatively authoritative Nature, seem alien in today's intellectual climate. So, to the modern mind, reason connotes self-creation in a more radical sense.

In short, there are both crucial continuities and important disjunctions between the Founders' and our modern conceptions of reason, and hence between what founding and current constitutionalists mean when they express a commitment to a politics governed by it. Modern constitutional discourse is a child of this persistent but evolving—or, some would say, decaying—commitment.

And what has this exalted, or exalting, commitment given us? The expansive reason of contemporary constitutional discourse is a seething sea of doctrines and techniques and theories and authorities providing the rhetorical resources that lawyers, judges, and scholars may use to argue *as a matter of constitutional law* for virtually any position that the climate of political opinion might countenance in the first place. Should government guarantee a minimum income, along with shelter, food, and clothing, to all citizens? Should individuals or legislators be free to consult their religious beliefs in deciding which candidates or bills to vote for? What about affirmative action? Should there be some sort of legal remedy for what Georgetown professor Robin West describes as the "state of servitude" inherent in the role of wife and mother? Should government regulate the production and sale of pornography? With respect to each of these questions, either an affirmative or negative answer can now be shown to be not merely prudent or imprudent but, given the current state of constitutional discourse, actually *required* or *prohibited* by the Constitution.

But a text that notoriously can mean almost everything may come to mean nearly nothing. So Laurence Tribe—who ought to know—acknowledges "the possibility of making noises in the Constitution's language that *sound* like an argument for just about anything," and he frets that "the text of the Constitution can be read to justify just about any

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decision—and so can safely be ignored." Other scholars wonder whether it is possible any longer to distinguish between parody and serious constitutional argument.

In short, those who come to modern constitutional discussions hoping to encounter the discursive rigor that "reason" connotes will instead find themselves lost in a sort of labyrinthine emptiness. Whether one considers the drearily stylized, solemnly insipid droning that so often emanates from the courts or the unmoored and turgid expositions of wearisome ideologies characteristic of more adventurous academic literature, there is very little in the discourse that merits the title of "reason." By all indications, rather, modern constitutional discourse is a veritable Babel.

The comparison invites further reflection. In modern usage, "Babel" connotes confusion or unintelligibility. But the allusion also taps into a more searching myth that has fascinated humans almost from the beginning. Michael Oakeshott, who wrote two different essays entitled "The Tower of Babel," observed that some version of the myth "is to be found among the stories of the Chinese, the Caldeans, and the ancient Hebrews, and among the Arab and Slav peoples, and the Aztecs of Peru. It has been told in the Greek, the Latin, the Celtic, and the Teutonic languages and in the tongues of those who for millennia have moved about the islands of the Pacific ocean." The story's universal fascination derives from its central theme: "It is concerned with earth and heaven; with men and gods and how they stand to one another."

Although the best known version of the story is in Genesis, Josephus gives a more detailed account:

> [After the great flood] God bade [Noah's descendants] to send out colonies, that they might not quarrel with each other but cultivate much of the earth and enjoy an abundance of its fruits; but in their blindness they did not hearken to Him, and in consequence were plunged into calamities. . . . They, never thinking that they owed their blessings to His benevolence and regarding their own might as the cause of their felicity, refused to obey. Nay, to this disobedience to God's will they even added the suspicion that God was plotting against them in urging them to emigrate, in order that, being divided, they might be more open to attack.
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> They were incited to this insolent contempt of God by Nebrodes, . . . an audacious man of doughty vigor. He persuaded them to attribute their prosperity not to God but to their own valor. . . . He threatened to have his revenge on God if He wished to inundate the earth again; for he would build a tower higher than the water could reach and avenge the destruction of their forefathers.
>
> The people were eager to follow this advice of Nebrodes, deeming it slavery to submit to God; so they set out to build the tower with indefatigable ardor and no slackening in the task; and it rose with a speed beyond all expectation. . . . Seeing their mad enterprise, God was not minded to exterminate them utterly, because even the destruction of the first victims had not taught their descendants wisdom; but He created discord among them by making them speak different languages, through the variety of which they could not understand one another. The place where they built the tower is now called Babylon from the confusion of the primitive speech once intelligible to all, for the Hebrews call confusion "Babel."

Modern allusions to "Babel" typically refer to the confusion that is the outcome of the story. But the story itself also explores the cause of that confusion. And it seems that the ultimate cause of the debacle, simply put, was human pride—pride not merely in the conventional sense of inordinate self-esteem but in the classic or Augustinian sense, in which pride denotes an attitude of revolt against providential governance with the aim of establishing human self-rule in its place. In more current terminology, the cause of confusion—of "Babel"—was an overweening determination to realize human autonomy.

The most crucial parallel to Babel in constitutional law concerns the central role of pride. In considering the constitutional project, of course, we talk not about pride, but rather about reason. But the qualities tend to converge. Reason has been less an identifiable epistemological method than an attitude, or an aspiration of the human spirit; it has denoted, in Gellner's words, "the overwhelming desire for a kind of self-creation." In short, modern reason is ancient pride.

And indeed, a current of pride runs through the constitutional tradition from the beginning. At the outset, the founding generation manifested a buoyant but still constrained pride. The reason of Jefferson and Paine and of what Henry May calls the Moderate Enlightenment that informed the Constitution did not rebel against the providential order, but at most rejected the received ways of understanding that order—tradition, authority, revelation, scripture—in favor of trusting in fresh human intellect. So even the most fervently enlightened Americans exhibited a sort of epistemological pride—nothing more. Later, "reason" came to describe a more aggressive aspiration, repudiating the cosmic design and demanding the right to create the world for itself.

In constitutional discourse, with its stodgy diction of doctrine and precedent, pride is typically disguised. Still, manifestations of pride, at least in its more ordinary sense of conceit or presumption, have been discernible from the outset. Recall the boasts of

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Jefferson and Wilson that the Constitution was "unquestionably the wisest ever yet presented to men" and "the best form of government that has ever been offered to the world." More recently, Ronald Dworkin has described judges as the "princes" of "law's empire" and philosophers—"if they are willing," as at least one of them apparently is—as the empire's "seers and prophets."

In the exercise of this prophetic calling, Dworkin in a recent book explains to a century of popes that they have misunderstood and misrepresented Catholic doctrines about abortion. And John Rawls asserts that a reasonable balance of competing interests will support a right to abortion at least in the first trimester; any religious or philosophical position inconsistent with this conclusion is peremptorily declared to be "to that extent unreasonable."

As it happens, the issue of abortion in particular has recently elicited outpourings of presumption, not only by scholars but also by judges. Abortion has been debated endlessly by theologians, philosophers, lawyers, politicians, columnists, teachers, students, and citizens generally. Yet in *Casey*, three Justices—who had been placed on the Court, incidentally, during a period in which relative anonymity was a leading prerequisite for successful appointment—saw it as their right and duty to call "the contending sides of a national controversy to end their national division by accepting a common mandate rooted in the Constitution." It turned out that the decision was not so much rooted in the Constitution as in the doctrine of precedent and—ironies begin to pile up at this point—in the Justices' perception that a contrary decision would undermine the Court's legitimacy by making it appear to be an institution influenced by politics. Nonetheless, the Justices gravely declared that "the character of a nation of people who aspire to live according to the rule of law" is ultimately to be measured by the people's willingness to put aside their deeply held moral and religious views and accept the Court's pronouncements on this and other divisive questions.

For many, like Robert Nagel, statements like these amount to "an extravagant expression of hubris." Mary Ann Glendon foresees that the *Casey* opinion will be "remembered less for its result than for its grandiose portrayal of the role of the Supreme Court in American society." Conversely, from a more detached or perhaps more cynical perspective, the Justices' pronouncements might be merely a source of mirth, as when the family's four-year-old emphatically declares that "I've decided we're all going to Disneyland today," and that the way to pay for the trip is to "just write a check." But whether one finds the Justices' self-important declarations infuriating or merely comical, the statements surely exude a remarkable presumption.

Still, the *Casey* opinion, like the statements by Wilson and Jefferson, Dworkin and Rawls, are most obviously manifestations of pride in the conventional sense. Do these pronouncements also reflect pride in the more classical sense as depicted in the Babel myth? More generally, the critical question is whether the constitutional project follows the same course and ends up at the same place as the Babel story. And the answer to that question, it seems, is more ambiguous.

If the Babel analogy holds true, the final outcome of pride—and thus of the presumption that for us goes under the names of "reason" or "constitutional discourse"—would be confusion. There is ample evidence of confusion in current constitutional debates. So in this respect the parallel remains intact.

In other respects, though, the analogy may seem to break down. After all, the Babel story ends in disaster. No one can understand anyone else. The Tower is abandoned. The people are dispersed. The builders are punished for their pride.

The constitutional project, by contrast, seems so far to be at least a qualified success story. To be sure, if we concentrate on constitutional discourse, examining it for cogency or intellectual coherence, there is cause for frustration. But if we consider the overall political system that constitutional law has established and helped to govern, our assessment may change. Political problems and injustices abound, but the American political system does seem to have achieved a measure of freedom and economic prosperity unprecedented in human history. So the commitment to reason may seem to have paid off after all, and the analogy to the Babel project appears inapt.

But do our political and economic successes really vindicate the faith we have placed in reason? The question might prompt us to recall the insight of Reinhold Niebuhr, who more than once invoked the Babel myth as a metaphor for understanding American politics and history. The application of the myth was hardly limited, in Niebuhr's view, to this country: "Man is constantly tempted to forget the finiteness of his cultures and civilization and to pretend a finality for them which they do not have. Every civilization and every culture is thus a Tower of Babel." But the story has special force for us, he suggested, with our pretensions to reason.

> Modern man is a rationalist who builds Towers of Babel without knowing it. If either moral pride or the spirit of rationalism . . . persuades us to establish a direct congruity between our good fortune and our virtue or our skill, we will inevitably claim more for our contribution to our prosperity than the facts warrant. This has remained a source of moral confusion in American life.

Niebuhr did not deny the political or economic achievements of American civilization. But he

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argued that our successes, real though they are, are neither as important nor as enduring as we may suppose. And the very significance of our accomplishments may lead us to overvalue them. "Human pride is greatest when it is based upon solid achievements; but the achievements are never great enough to justify its pretensions."

The observation has a certain timely plausibility. We sometimes wonder whether our prosperity, though real enough (for some people), may have been purchased through injustice and oppression, like the elegant opulence of (some classes of) the antebellum South. Or the material prosperity and freedom we celebrate might from a more discerning perspective be merely vulgar and licentious—enticing but ultimately demeaning to the human spirit. Moreover, we are sometimes afflicted with a sense of impending crisis, lending force to Niebuhr's observation that "one of the most pathetic aspects of human history is that every civilization expresses itself most pretentiously, compounds its partial and universal values most convincingly, and claims immortality for its finite existence at the very moment when the decay which leads to death has already begun." Niebuhr's statement is eerily similar to law professor Sanford Levinson's speculation that "the 'death of constitutionalism' may be the central event of our time."

But these disquieting reminders, even if apt, are also in a sense not sufficient to vindicate the Babel analogy. The Babel building project, after all, was an exercise in complete futility; it never did and never could attain, even in part, its objective of reaching heaven. By contrast, our achievements in freedom and prosperity seem both valuable and real, even if we sometimes exaggerate them and even if they may not endure to the end of time. If reason is responsible for these achievements, then perhaps it is unduly severe to dwell on their finitude.

But *does* reason deserve the credit for the liberty and prosperity this country has enjoyed? Niebuhr considered alternative explanations. One possibility was that the beneficial conditions that have prevailed in this country are largely attributable not to human reason and effort, but rather to providence. Though this explanation may seem inadmissible today, it would not have seemed so, Niebuhr observed, to the colonizing and founding generations. "Both the Puritans and the Jeffersonians attributed . . . prosperity primarily to a divine providence which, as Jefferson observed, 'led our forefathers, as Israel of old, out of their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life.'"

In the contemporary intellectual climate, of course, an account of the country's successes that rests on the notion of "America as the darling of divine providence" is not likely to gain many converts. Niebuhr understood this. "Modern man's confidence in his power over historical destiny prompted the rejection of every older conception of an overruling providence in history." But Niebuhr had another suggestion: If we cannot admit providence as an explanation, perhaps we can accept fortuity instead. So he emphasized the degree to which "the wealth of our natural resources, and the fortuitous circumstance that we conquered a continent just when the advancement of technics made it possible to organize that continent into a single political and economic unit, lay at the foundation of our prosperity."

Although in one sense fortuity seems the opposite of providential design, in another way the two accounts might converge. It hardly follows from the supposition of a providential design in history that finite human beings have the ability to discern the design. Not comprehending the grand plan, we would perceive historical happenings as random, disconnected, contingent. Perhaps fortuity is simply the face that providence wears when addressing us. And recognizing our inability to comprehend the cosmic plan, or even to know whether there is one, we should perhaps not try to see farther than we can. Indeed, the attempt to penetrate the face of fortuity might itself be a manifestation of unwarranted arrogance. So Niebuhr advised: "If it is not possible for modern man to hold by faith that there is a larger meaning in the intricate patterns of history than those which his own virtues or skills supply, he would do well to emphasize fortune and caprice in his calculations."

But fortuity as a controlling force is at least as threatening as providence is to the project of governance in accordance with reason. "Providence" suggests that our affairs are in reality guided by something *above* or greater than human reason, while "fortuity" implies that the controlling agent is something *beneath* or less than reason; but either view renders illusory the notion that we are controlling our own affairs through the exercise of our own reason. So both the providence and fortuity accounts signal the futility of the constitutional project, at least in its loftier aspirations.

Has it turned out, then, that the common opinion reported by Machiavelli—that "worldly events are so governed by fortune and by God, that men cannot by their prudence change them"—was correct? Should we renounce the effort to live by reason, abandoning ourselves to providence or fortuity?

Upon reflection, the prescription both follows from and is incompatible with our discussion of the Babel story. If history *is* governed by a providential plan, then presumably the very aspiration to live in accordance with reason, vain though it may ultimately be, is part of that plan. For those generations that lived during or after the Enlightenment, perhaps our role in the divine comedy calls upon us to act out the unenviable part of a self-important jester who has deluded himself into thinking he is king. The part is comically presumptuous, to be sure; but it would be

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equally presumptuous to suppose that we can defy the providential direction that has assigned us this embarrassing role. And we may glean some consolation by reflecting that for all we know, a self-deceived and high-sounding fool may be as essential to the overall plot as a sagacious hero.

Or perhaps there is no overall design, and blind fortuity rules. In that case, it seems that fortuity has blindly formed us in such a way that a commitment to "reason" is a part of our very identity. "Rationalism is our destiny. It is not our option," Gellner observes with a sort of defiant resignation. "We are a race of failed Prometheuses." We are what we are, and we will do what we will do; and for us, it seems, this means living—or trying to live, or at least pretending to live—by reason.

But this conclusion has a tendency to dissolve itself. What we are, in this fatalistic view, is a species that attempts to live in accord with what reason teaches. So if it turns out that reason teaches the futility of trying to live in accordance with reason, then it may be that we *will* abandon the life of reason after all. And if we *do* follow this course, then it also seems we cannot be defying any providential plan. On the contrary, the providential plan, if there is one, apparently will have ordained just this course for us. The plot will be the old, paradoxical one in which the fool finally becomes wise by renouncing his pretensions to wisdom.

So we end in a conundrum. And if there is any admonition that flows from this confounding conclusion, perhaps the admonition is that whatever we do, we should do it with humility. That at least was Niebuhr's conclusion. Without denying the fact of human responsibility not only for our personal but for our collective fate, he insisted on calling attention to

> the possibility and necessity of living in a dimension of meaning in which the urgencies of the struggle are subordinated to a sense of awe before the vastness of the historical drama in which we are jointly involved; to a sense of modesty about the virtue, wisdom, and power available to us for the resolution of its perplexities; to a sense of contrition about the common human frailties and foibles which lie at the foundation of . . . our vanities; and to a sense of gratitude for the divine mercies which are promised to those who humble themselves. FT

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red light: stop and wait
huddled at the intersection
the engine struggles and gasps
too cold for the heater
head-bowed pedestrians pass
hunched into hoods faceless
iced breath fogs the windshield
faces form in the mind

where did they come from
these faces of summer
on the rime-bleached streets
the traffic lanes invisible
pale, pale, my girl:
who would have thought
the old memories to have had
so little blood in them

shiver and gun the motor
soon we will leave it all behind us
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pedestrians freeze at the curb
exit the ghosts

Phoebe S. Spinrad

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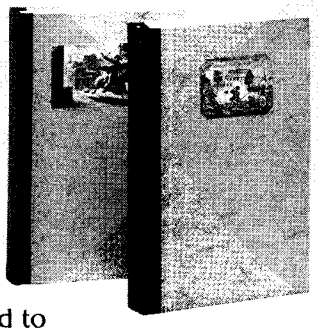

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Books In Review

The Innocence of Billy Graham

JUST AS I AM: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BILLY GRAHAM. *HarperSan Francisco/Zondervan. 760 pp. $28.50.*

Reviewed by **Mark A. Noll**

SEVERAL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS suggest that the time has come to take stock of Billy Graham: the frailties of his age, the encroachments of Parkinson's disease, the death or retirement of many of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's original team, the extension of the evangelist's mantle to his son Franklin, and a growing number of solid assessments from outside Graham's immediate circle (the best of which is William Martin's 1991 *A Prophet with Honor*). But the publication of his memoirs mandates an effort at long-term assessment. And the fact that the book, though apparently shortened considerably from earlier drafts, is nonetheless jam-packed with the details of an incredibly peripatetic career provides a great deal of material for such an assessment.

MARK A. NOLL *is Professor of History at Wheaton College.*

Just As I Am does many of the things that memoirs from such a person at such a stage of life often do. Graham's choice of title, for instance, evokes much that has been memorable about his public activity. The phrase is from a hymn written by Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871), sister of an evangelical Anglican clergyman:

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy Blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

The hymn's use of the language of the King James Version of the Bible, its reminder of the freighted spiritual significance of saintly women (usually slightly in the background), as also its quintessentially evangelical mixture of Christocentric self-resignation and spiritual self-assertion—all of these are pure Billy Graham. The title also evokes the much more concrete scene played out at the end of thousands of Graham's sermons where, with this hymn sung slowly in the background by a massed choir under the direction of Cliff Barrows, Graham appeals to his listeners to rise from their seats and walk to the front of the auditorium (or stadium or hall

God is opening before the Church the horizons of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel. I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization. --Pope John Paul II

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or amphitheater) to make a decision for Christ.

Just As I Am is also characteristic for using a few of its pages in an effort to set the record straight. Graham is not at his best in these sections, which include a concession about perhaps over-stressing the spiritual danger of international communism in his early preaching, a defense of incautious statements about the relative freedom of Christian worshipers made after Graham's first visits behind the Iron Curtain in the late 1970s and 1980s, several obviously painful efforts to describe the difficulties in raising a family of five children while being perpetually away from home, and a declaration (once again) of loyalty to Richard Nixon. What sets this memoir apart is not the effectiveness of such rebuttals, for self-justifications of this sort, whatever their merits, are almost impossible to pull off. Rather, it is the mood or tone of voice with which such infrequent efforts at score-settling are attempted. Even in these passages the Billy Graham who reveals himself in this memoir is an almost unbelievably nice person.

GRAHAM SEEMS to like everyone. He has a good word to say even about those who railed at him from the theological right as a tool of Satan (for consorting with modernists) and from the theological left as an ignoramus, bigot, or front man for American Big Business. Graham has known well all of the Presidents since Truman, he has been invited to offer spiritual counsel to many high-ranking American officials, and he has met the leaders of dozens of countries around the world. Nobody, it seems, could get his goat, at least for long. In 1954, for example, a hard-bitten columnist pounded Graham in print shortly before he arrived in London. Graham responded by seeking out the reporter in a pub (lemonade for Billy), whereupon the reporter softened up enough to write a commendatory column. Karl Barth once stood in the rain to hear Graham preach in Basel. When he told Graham that the sermon from John 3:3 was good but should not have stressed the must in "you *must* be born again," Graham begged to differ (and was soon gratified to hear Emil Brunner affirm his position). But then Graham closes this account concerning Barth with these words: "In spite of our theological differences, we remained good friends." That line, with variations for politics, region, ethnicity, and other appropriate variables, could be the epitome for the book.

Graham's apparently bottomless kindness, combined with the lightning pace of his narrative—so many visits, so many good friends, so many celebrities—means that *Just As I Am* is not a particularly

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challenging book. It is, nonetheless, worth reading carefully, both because Graham is the genuine article and because many of its details and much of its tone are in fact quite useful for attempting a more complex assessment of his career.

Three theses may be worth considering as a contribution to such a longer-term reckoning. First, Graham's nose for the powerful took some of the edge off his message but also allowed him to become an extraordinary symbol for the universality of Christian faith. Whether consciously or not, Graham practiced a strategy of access from his earliest days as a student preacher. Always charismatic as a speaker, always friendly, always morally upright, always careful about funds, he has worn his fame very well. Over time, especially after Watergate, he became more consistent in keeping his political and international views out of sight, even as he continued to exploit political and diplomatic friendships.

The result was access to the top levels of political decision-making as well as his position as probably the twentieth century's most widely recognized human being. (Think, for example, of Graham in the three year period, 1958 to 1960, preaching before large crowds at multiple sites in the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, and then again in the three-year period, 1988 to 1990, doing the same at sites in China, the Soviet Union, Canada, England, Hungary, West Germany, Hong Kong, and again the United States—and carrying on the same way for most of the intervening thirty years. It is a pace that no mere politician, basketball player, or rock star could hope to match.) To maintain this level of well-regarded fame has taken work at reducing friction—moral, political, and personal. But he has done it. Graham, in short, has traded angularity for access.

IT TURNS OUT to have been a good trade, for the second thing to notice about Graham is the way he minimized offense at his preaching by restricting his enumeration of sins mostly to those that received close attention in the evangelical culture: malicious neglect of spouse and children, overindulgence in drink, sexual immorality, and capitulation to anomie.

While he gives many indications of realizing that sin also manifests itself as heedless egotism, self-aggrandizement, greed, callousness toward the poor, excessive self-protection, and lust for the main chance, these sins (more the pride of life than the lusts of the flesh or eyes) have not figured prominently in his sermons or personal witness. Since in his sermons the sense of sin is the beginning point for the balm of the

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Gospel, the charge of self-protecting spiritual myopia might be reasonable. Why witness about how Christ forgives sins to whichever public person you best love to hate (for Graham is almost certain to have maintained some level of friendship with that person), if you won't speak plainly to that person about the sin most obviously being commited? It is a good question, but perhaps a misdirected question, since Graham's preference for generic (and hence not too threatening) sins has enabled him to keep speaking to all sorts of people in all sorts of places and, moreover, has enabled the innumerable schemes, ventures, publications, movies, programs, educational institutions, and miscellaneous ventures to which he has lent his name to benefit from the almost universal fondness for Graham himself.

In other words, Graham has brokered his particularly inoffensive way of reminding people that they are sinners in need of grace into one of the most powerful forces for Christian ecumenicity ever seen—which is to say, himself.

GRAHAM EMERGED from a divisive brand of Protestant fundamentalism that in the 1930s and 1940s—for example at Bob Jones University in South Carolina and Wheaton College in Illinois—was fighting for its life, in all senses of the phrase. Graham took to heart the Cross- and Christ-centered focus of that tradition but early on he began to outgrow its combative boundary-setting. In 1957, fundamentalists broke with Graham (not Graham with fundamentalists) when he invited non-fundamentalist churches to help sponsor a major crusade in New York City. So too Graham reached out across racial lines earlier than all but a few of his southern (or even midwestern) evangelical peers, and that at a time when Graham's publishing brainchild, *Christianity Today*, was being funded by wealthy Americans who equated civil rights agitation with the Communist threat. He was also one of the first Protestants, evangelical or mainline, to exploit the common ground of the Apostles' Creed ("my own basic creed," he calls it here) with Roman Catholics and the Orthodox. By so doing, Graham has done more than any person in the twentieth century (with the possible exception of C. S. Lewis) to promote from the Protestant side the enriching concerns of a meaningfully specific "mere Christianity."

In these memoirs, Graham takes particular delight in highlighting mutual supporting relationships with Cardinal Cushing, Rose Kennedy, John Paul II, Bishop Fulton Sheen, and other well-known Catholics. As early as the mid-1950s, he had determined to maintain a broad basis for cooperation: "If a

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man accepts the deity of Christ and is living for Christ to the best of his knowledge, I intend to have fellowship with him in Christ." The fact that he has maintained that basis allows for a balanced judgment. The Graham who portrays sin in a relatively unthreatening way is also the Graham who reaches out to redeemed sinners of every description. The result is a Christian witness that has knitted together an incredibly far-flung network of Christian believers from all over the globe and from every level of society.

The third thing to notice about Graham's career concerns the most important matter. Whatever the assessment of Graham's view of sin, what about his view of God? Here the question is whether Graham's strategies of access and ecumenicity undermine his message. The charge that perhaps they do arises from two ways in which Graham has seemed to reduce the Christian Gospel to a utilitarian device existing for other, more ultimate purposes. In the first instance, it is possible to glimpse pressure on his message from the moral calculus, singularly American, of republican citizenship. This calculus suggests that in a republic the good health of the polity depends upon the morality of the citizenry; that the best thing for personal morality is religion; and that, since Christianity is the best religion, it is positioned to do the most for America. Especially in the first part of his career, Graham was prone to statements that seemed to make the destiny of the United States loom larger than the fate of the Christian Gospel. "I seriously doubt if the old America is going to exist another generation unless we have a turning to Christ." Some who share Graham's beliefs would agree with him, but also wonder if he was making the penultimate into the ultimate.

In the second instance, Graham throughout his career has spoken of Christianity, again in his words, as "alone" pointing "the way to individual peace, social harmony, life adjustment, and spiritual satisfaction." For a Christian, true enough again. But priorities seem disarranged when sermons conclude as, for example, one did in New York in 1957: "All your life you've been searching for peace and joy, happiness, forgiveness. I want to tell you, before you leave Madison Square Garden this night of May 15, you can find everything that you have been searching for, in Christ. He can bring that inward, deepest peace to your soul. He can forgive every sin you've ever committed."

The charge that may be laid against the utilitarian drift of Graham's Christian message is the

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charge that so troubled Martin Luther as he struggled to find a merciful God nearly five centuries ago. The heart of Luther's spiritual dilemma was the fear that his supposed search for God was really a search for his own ease of soul, the fear that he was seeking God primarily for what God could do for him. Luther may have been overly scrupulous, but he could tell idolatry when he saw it, and tell it most clearly when he saw it up close.

BILLY GRAHAM CLAIMS for himself neither Luther's theological acumen nor his penetrating powers of self-analysis. Yet what rescued Luther from himself was also what has preserved the authenticity of Billy Graham's message. The reason that Graham's message, though admittedly soft at the edges, remains solid as a rock is that at its center is the Cross. In the early 1950s Graham solidified early practice by dedicating himself to the saving work of Christ as the heart of his message: "I made a commitment never to preach again without being sure that the Gospel was as complete and clear as possible, centering on Christ's sacrificial death for our sins on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead for our salvation."

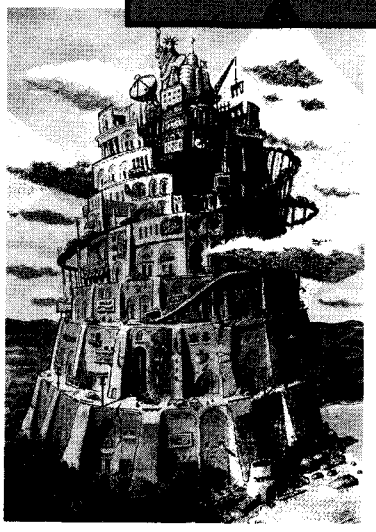
At the close of his memoirs, as at the close of so many sermons, Graham restates the appeal for conversion that is the trademark of his career. As he makes that appeal in this book there is his customary attention to what the Gospel does for us. But undergirding all, from first to last, is an equally full sense of what the Gospel does to us:

> We are not here by chance. God has put us here for a purpose, and our lives are never fulfilled and complete until His purpose becomes the foundation and center of our lives. . . . When you [open your heart to Jesus Christ], you become a child of God, adopted into His family forever. He also comes to live within you and will begin to change you from within. No one who truly gives his or her life to Christ will ever be the same, for the promise of His Word is true: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). We have seen this happen countless times all over the world, and it can happen in your life as well. Open your life to Christ today.

If in the hands of Billy Graham, the Gospel bends, nonetheless, it does not break. To conclude that Graham has remained faithful to the

Thomas H. Naylor and William H. Willimon

Downsizing the U.S.A.



"[Naylor and Willimon] continue their search for purpose and significance. Practically everywhere they turn they see Americans paying a high price for the bigness and complexity of modern society, and they warn that imposed unity and universality are false solutions. . . . [They] appropriate the term *downsizing* for their own use; it becomes a tool for clearing away the physical and spiritual clutter in our lives to help us discover that less really can be more."
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message that God saves sinners for His own purposes, as well as for theirs, is the highest accolade a fellow-believer can bestow on this remarkable man. But Graham, of course, has become more than just a rallying point for Christian believers. He is also the most attractive public face that evangelical Protestantism has offered to the world in the half century since World War II. When considering the range of other personalities who might have fulfilled that role had Graham not remained faithful to his message, perhaps it also needs to be said that those who do not share Billy Graham's beliefs may have even more cause to be thankful for his life than those who do.

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BRIGHTEST HEAVEN OF INVENTION: A CHRISTIAN GUIDE TO SIX SHAKESPEARE PLAYS. By PETER J. LEITHART. *Cannon Press (Moscow, ID). 284 pp. $15.50 (+$3 s/h).*

Reviewed by Margaret Boerner

SHAKESPEARE HARDLY LACKED esteem in his own age. His contemporaries took appraising and even jealous notice of him. Ben Jonson, nine years his younger, offered an elegy in the First Folio that declared "like Apollo he came forth to warm/Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!" And Milton, two generations younger, offered a tribute in the Second Folio that declared the playwright to be one of the muses themselves—"Dear son of memory"—who left behind so large a monument of astonished readers that "kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

But it was in succeeding ages that Shakespeare assumed his commanding position as the premier author of English literature, the central subject of nearly every great critical work written in English—and many of those written in German or even French. Of course, Shakespeare has also been subjected to critics who twisted him into bizarre shapes merely to advance their own theses and, thereby, their own careers.

But he has also, and perhaps more distressingly, attracted the attention of those who love him but hardly know why they do—desiring to see in him a reflection of their own deepest beliefs. Indeed, Ben Jonson had already warned in his elegy against a "blind affection" for Shakespeare "which doth ne'er advance / The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance." The most notorious of these are those who insist that Shakespeare's plays were written by someone else, with various conspiracy theories accounting for the fact that Jonson and other contemporaries of Shakespeare said they knew

MARGARET BOERNER *teaches in the Humanities Program at Villanova University.*

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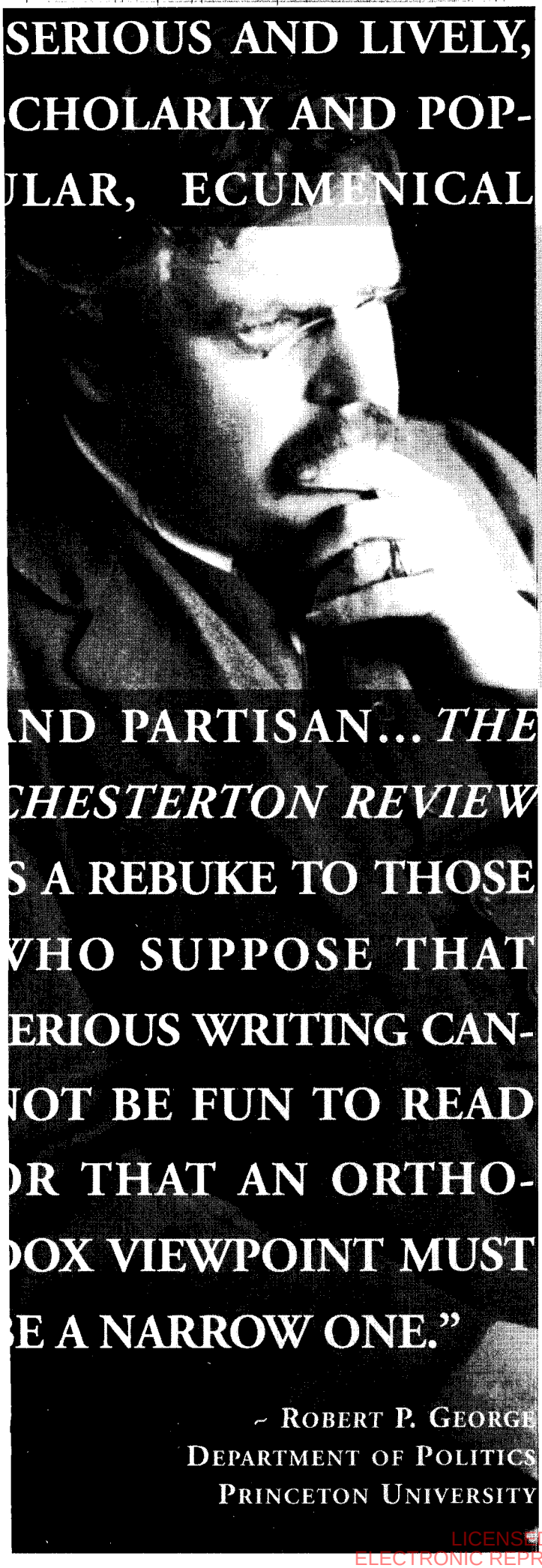

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him. (The latest of such efforts is Joseph Sobran's much-pilloried, if fascinating, attempt to identify Edward de Vere as the author of the Sonnets in *Alias Shakespeare.*)

Another group that "urgeth all by chance" is the enthusiastic congery of critics who insist that Shakespeare's plays present a deliberately and explicitly Christian message. Peter Leithart, a Presbyterian minister (and frequent contributor of theological opinions to FIRST THINGS)—writing his *Brightest Heaven of Invention: A Christian Guide to Six Shakespeare Plays* for high school students and "adults who are discovering or rediscovering Shakespeare"—is only the latest in a long line of critics to seek out Shakespeare's Christian drama.

Holding that "real life is sovereignly shaped and arranged by God into a story," Leithart argues that all stories set forth the archetypical Christian story—and Shakespeare's stories most of all. The argument seems on its face a little muddled. If, as Christians believe, God has chosen to reveal Himself in the stories of the Old Testament and the Master Story that culminates in the New Testament, then it may be that real life is divinely arranged in the structures of a story, though that takes us into deep theological waters. But do we really want to say that it necessarily follows that *all* stories are divine? Are we really prepared to hold that there are no stories that do not explicitly and deliberately retell the Christ-event?

IF NOTHING ELSE, such a view seems to confuse the absolutely hypothetical nature of fiction—and the freedom of creation granted to human imagination—with what Leithart undoubtedly holds is the *true* story of God's actions in history. As Sir Philip Sidney said in answering the Puritan charge that plays gave public scandal because they were monstrous lies, "Now for the poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth."

To Leithart, however, Shakespeare's plays are specific instances of the "master redemption story of the Bible." He claims, for example, that "we will find it useful to compare Macbeth's fall from power to Jesus' triumph over Satan, 'the ruler of this world,' and to consider Malcolm and Macduff as something like 'Christ figures.'" Indeed, Leithart sees Christ figures all through the plays, so eager is he to see Shakespeare as a Christian writer suitable for Christian readers: Henry V, "as an anointed king, is a Christ figure"; and *Hamlet* shows us a fallen world without the Redeemer and the "folly and danger of . . . redemption through violence"—so that at the end of the play, "the meek inherit the land," by which Leithart evidently means "strong-arm" Fortinbras.

IN RECENT YEARS the urge to find Christ figures in Shakespeare has been steamrollered by new historicism and other critical fads, but it formerly occupied some of the most learned of Shakespeare's twentieth-century critics. G. Wilson Knight—a brilliant if shifty critic—notoriously treated Duke Vincentio in *Measure for Measure* as a character in which "the actions of God are anthropomorphically represented," the Duke (re)appearing in the last scene "in righteousness, majesty, and judgment." Others have seen in the play: a gospel lesson told by Jesus (the Duke); St. Paul legalistically defending his position to the Romans; and King James subduing his subjects (another Christ figure, according to Leithart). Some have said that Isabella, Angelo, or Mariana is the Christ figure in *Measure for Measure.* Examining plot as it intersects with character, other critics have seen the Crucifixion story in the feigned (comic) death of Hero in *Much Ado about Nothing* and the tragic deaths of Cordelia, Desdemona, Timon of Athens, and even Hamlet (of whom, surely, there is nothing that is not ambiguous).

Many of those who see Christ figures in Shakespeare are not particularly religious, and many great Christian critics—Samuel Johnson and Northrop Frye (a Protestant minister) come to mind—do not read Shakespeare as Christian allegory, holding that a being who is both God and man, who dies and is resurrected, and whose death redeems us from sin into everlasting life cannot be represented in fiction as anything other than Himself. Indeed, it hardly occurred to anyone before the twentieth century to identify Christian allegories in Shake-

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speare, and despite looking, no one in this century has found much to suggest, let alone prove, that Shakespeare and his contemporaries meant their characters to represent figures of Christ or, for that matter, any biblical personage. But, as Richard Levin points out in his 1979 *New Readings vs. Old Plays*, "This surely is the sort of thing one would expect to be recorded somewhere—for instance, in the spirited debate that was then being waged [by the Puritans] about the morality of the drama, where it would have been especially relevant."

It may be that the desire to find another story whose ethical import has already been determined by one's faith rather than facing a difficult, ambiguous, ambivalent, hypothetical, unsettling play by Shakespeare is characteristic of our chafing at seeing only through a glass darkly. But it seems to me that critics and readers in our secular twentieth century simply no longer recognize how questionable and even scary it once was to compare any human person to a biblical figure, especially to God. Two centuries ago, in his preface to the works of the poet Edmund Waller, Samuel Johnson reasoned that:

> From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved. . . . The ideas of Christian Theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament.

Making parallels between a human story and Christ's story can even suggest blasphemy. The Abuses of Players Act of 1606 forbade "the greate Abuse of the Holy Name of God in Stageplayes," and was taken by the players' companies to mean that the God of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament could not be mentioned at all; hence, there are only "gods" in *King Lear*.

Shakespeare was baptized and instructed in the faith of his country, which was Protestant and strongly predestinarian, thanks to Henry VIII and Thomas Cranmer. Some historical evidence suggests that Shakespeare's family was recusant Roman Catholic, but Shakespeare does not reveal his religion to us. In fact, he reveals nothing of himself to us. But he so thoroughly understands human beings that he even understands how we explain ourselves to ourselves—how Claudius, Lady Macbeth, Richard III, Cleopatra, and Hamlet see themselves internally. Authors are not required to do this and few authors do; in fact, few even of the great authors do. Henry James, Milton, Spenser, and Dickens mostly see their characters externally. But to Shakespeare, nothing human was alien, and it does him a real disservice to insist—especially to inexperienced readers—that he was painting Christian allegory by numbers.

Spiraling into Nothingness

AGAINST LIBERALISM. By JOHN KEKES. *Cornell University Press. 244 pp. $29.95.*

***Reviewed by* Brian C. Anderson**

I REMEMBER A LECTURE a few years back, heard when I was in graduate school, that provided one of those rare flashes that illumine an entire universe. The speaker was a well-published political philosopher (and, as I was to later discover, a former Jesuit). His topic was typical for the kind of analytic liberal theory he practiced: how best to interpret, and implement, equality, particularly when faced with the demands of modern feminism. For this philosopher, "our intuitions" led us inexorably down a single path, at the end of which, once medical advances made it physically possible, men should give birth to children. Only with such a mutation in the species—call it engineered hermaphrodism—would equality be-

BRIAN C. ANDERSON *is Senior Editor at* City Journal *and author of* Raymond Aron: The Recovery of the Political, *just out from Rowman & Littlefield.*

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tween men and women be possible, gender roles rendered a matter of choice, not of destiny.

Much of contemporary liberal political philosophy—the philosophy of John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Thomas Nagel, and their many followers—is captured in this breathtaking argument: the denial of any intrinsic dignity to the human world; the reconceptualization of moral life along contractualist lines; the elevation of equality and autonomy above all other goods; the dismissal of philosophical analysis of foundations, metaphysical or otherwise; and, finally, a contempt for what most people believe and have believed for most of human history. "Our intuitions," for this liberal philosopher, were the intuitions of liberal philosophers, not the moral sentiments of a common humanity.

Reading John Kekes' dense, argumentative, and coldly logical *Against Liberalism* brought this memory flooding back, for it is exactly the kind of empty theorizing indulged in by the former Jesuit that Kekes condemns. Growing out of a series of books and essays Kekes has written over the last several years—on the nature of moral argument, the problem of evil, and the conflictual goods and evils that make up life as we know it—*Against Liberalism* marks the author's most explicit broadside against liberal theory to date. It is also largely critical, a demolition job clearing the ground for a forthcoming book that promises to provide a more complete defense of Kekes' pluralism (an earlier work, *The Morality of Pluralism*, already moved in this direction).

KEKE'S ARGUMENT, in brief, is that contemporary liberal theory is incoherent. The negative goals liberals pursue can be summarized under the heading of the *avoidance of evil*: to protect the liberty of individuals from "dictatorship, torture, poverty, intolerance, repression, discrimination, lawlessness," and other affronts to human dignity. Liberalism throughout its history has been concerned with remedying such evils, and some of the greatest works of the human spirit, from Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* to Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, have been written with the noble conviction that human liberty is worth preserving.

Kekes does not sufficiently stress how the contemporary variant of liberalism is at far remove from the earlier, richer, and more modest liberalism of Montesquieu, Tocqueville, or, in our century, Raymond Aron, Bertrand de Jouvenel, and Isaiah Berlin. But he does correctly show that the positive goals of contemporary liberals—in particular autonomy, distributive justice, and equality—are guaranteed to exacerbate the evils it is the negative task of liberalism to avoid. Were the agenda of contemporary liberalism to be fully realized, Kekes argues, the result surely would be the destruction of human flourishing.

Take, as an example, the contemporary liberal concern for justice. Under the influence of John Rawls, justice has been perceived to entail the redistribution of resources in the pursuit of greater equality, regardless of the merit of present holders or future recipients of goods. On this view, justice as equality must disregard merit, for we do not "deserve" our genetic or social inheritance. Whether someone works hard, excels at school, or is a fine athlete, in other words, has little to do with them, and perhaps everything to do with the milieu into which they were born or the genetic card they were dealt at birth. Thus we should ensure, institutionally, that those lucky enough to succeed are rewarded only *after* those unlucky enough to fail are first benefited.

But as Kekes observes, the implementation of this understanding of justice would lead to powerfully counterintuitive—even absurd—results. In the upside down Rawlsian universe, a single mother who managed to improve her lot and that of her children through hard work, thrift, and discipline would find her somewhat greater resources subject to redistribution to another single mother who, say, was addicted to drugs, neglected her children, and refused to work. Where is the justice in that? Indeed, pushed to its limit, this logic would lead to greater suffering, for it would socially reward self-destructive behavior and penalize virtue.

Similarly questionable is the liberal embrace of autonomy—the idea that the imperial self is to be the sole arbiter of its destiny. Kekes sees autonomy as the god to which all other liberal allegiances pay homage. But why should the increase of autonomy lead to the diminishment of evil, as liberals claim? It would only do so were we to understand human nature, in the manner of Rousseau, to be intrinsically good, with evil a mirage of unjust social life that will disappear with the transformation of corrupt institutions. Yet this flies in the face of everything we should sensibly know at the end of our horrifying century about the nature of man—that he is capable of good *and* evil, that his nature is divided, that he is marked by original sin. To in-

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crease human autonomy is therefore to increase the human capacity for evil; to rein in evil might require reining in human autonomy.

OLDER LIBERALS like Tocqueville and Montesquieu understood liberty to be an achievement, and inseparable from its articulation with a rich world of goods and spiritual bodies that would nourish it; contemporary liberals, Kekes reminds us, embrace an empty freedom, ignorant of evil, devoid of good, spiraling into nothingness. It is a freedom where everything—identity, gender, truth—is up for grabs, and where nothing means anything. The real spiritual father of contemporary liberalism is Jean-Paul Sartre, but at least he faced the implications of nihilistic liberty with greater honesty.

Kekes concludes *Against Liberalism* with a suggestion that what is worthwhile in liberalism might best be preserved by a conservative pluralism, one that recognized the incompatibility of human ends, the necessity of difficult trade-offs, and the existence of certain goods—among them, security, civility, and peace—not given much time of day by contemporary liberals. Some of the most important work being done in political thought today is being done by post-liberals like Kekes: Alasdair MacIntyre, Pierre Manent, and others. But Kekes' belief in the death of God (he describes it as "the absence of cosmic justice"), along with the unresolved status of human nature in his thought, may prevent him from giving an adequate theoretical treatment to these problems in the future. Any such treatment would necessitate a deeper engagement with the classical tradition—the plural Western inheritance of Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome—than Kekes seems willing to allow.

We can be thankful, however, for this patient exercise in criticism—in some ways the most comprehensive yet published—of the dominant tendency in academic political philosophy, a liberalism at once barren and hubristic that mocks the beliefs and hopes of men and women as they are, and celebrates much that they despise.

Meaningful Work

FRIEND OF THE SOUL: A BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY OF WORK. By NORVENE VEST. *Cowley. 156 pp. $11.95.*

***Reviewed by* Gilbert Meilaender**

ALTHOUGHT IT IS sometimes forgotten that a worthy human life can be lived by those who do not work, or do not work for pay, it is still true that work is one of the most fundamental of human experiences. Necessary for human existence, it is also an activity in which we struggle to find meaning and purpose beyond necessity alone. In a book aimed not at scholars but at any Christian reader concerned with the meaning of work, Norvene Vest draws on the Benedictine Rule for an understanding of work as "the friend of the soul." She treats work as a matter of vocation (being called to particular tasks), of stewardship (taking care of God's creation), and of obedience (as the key to finding freedom even within work that we do not ourselves control). I have found within myself two quite different responses to this book, and I therefore offer below two reviews in paired paragraphs. A reader may take every other paragraph to read only one of the reviews at a time—or the paired paragraphs in turn to read both simultaneously.

(A1) The book is written in a simple, direct style aimed at general readers. Each of the principal chapters concludes with "reflection exercises," and Vest specifically encourages her readers to read the book together with others and jointly explore with them the exercises for reflection. By drawing on the Rule of St. Benedict for her central concepts of vocation, stewardship, and obedience, she locates her reflection within a tradition and achieves a focus that might otherwise be lacking in so wide-ranging a work. Thus, for example, she can ground a discussion of the attitude of stewardship in a sentence from the Rule that says:

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"The cellarer should look upon all the vessels and goods of the monastery as though they were the consecrated vessels of the altar." Here mundane things are holy things, as holy as the sacramental vessels that contain Christ's body and blood, and one can begin to sense how the work we do in our bodies might truly be a holy task.

(B1) Simply and clearly written as it is, the book's prose is marred by a concerted effort to avoid the masculine pronoun for God. This leads, inevitably, to a "Look, Dick, see Spot; Spot can run" style of sentence. Thus, for example: "God's word has an effective and inherent power of its own. It goes forth from God to enable a response in those who hear. God spoke forth creation, and it was so! God's purpose is accomplished by God's very word. . . ." It is as though one were to write: "Sue is leaving Sue's house across town so that Sue can take Sue's grandmother for a ride in Sue's car." (It could be worse, of course. Vest nowhere gives us the equivalent of "Sue Sueself is leaving. . . .") Can the craft of such writing possibly be understood as a holy task? Then too, a reader sometimes feels that the attempt to ground her claims about work in Benedict's Rule are a bit of a stretch. Thus, for example, the Rule states that the cellarer is to be chosen from the members of the monastic community. Vest finds in this fact "important implications" for us to ponder. "To what extent are we active in encouraging one another's growth and celebrating the talents of people with whom we work?" One might wonder whether our contemporary delight in "strokes" and our manipulative use of them for controlling others is really best grounded in the Rule.

(A2) Seeking to envision work as a "holy task," Vest begins where the Bible does, with the first chapter of Genesis. She finds there an understanding of work as "co-creative" activity in which we share with God the care of the creation. In our work all of us express our own unique abilities, and we serve as God's partners in bringing his creation to its intended fulfillment. If Protestants once argued—with some justification—that Catholics were too ready to distinguish those with special "religious" vocations from those with more garden-variety work, Vest has certainly gotten the message. God calls not just some, but every one of us, to work—which is, first of all, the work of increased intimacy and harmony with God and, then, with the whole creation. God labors to create—and sees that the creation is good. Even so, our vocation is an invitation to joy.

(B2) Contrary to what some who teach the Bible in our colleges and universities think, it is not all that hard to understand that there are two accounts of creation (in Genesis 1 and in Genesis 2-3), and many people know this. What is harder is to think through how to read these accounts as part of one connected story. That harder task Vest does not take up. She is content to pit the two accounts against each other, rejecting any view that "we are meant to suffer in our work," and emphasizing only work as a call to joy. This is where the currently popular language of work as "co-creation" easily leads—to a concept of human beings as "workers" that has as much Marx as Benedict in it—and we should have a little skepticism about such an exalted image of our work. I recommend to all devotees of "co-creation" chapter 2 of George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*. His unforgettable depiction of the work of the miners is a good antidote and may encourage us to try harder to make place for Genesis 3 in our understanding of work.

(A3) Precisely because it makes us partners with God, work is, as the first sentence of chapter 48 of Benedict's Rule puts it, "the friend of the soul." And this, Vest believes, is a message that needs to be heard in the contemporary workplace, in which many are "profoundly cynical about any possibility of meaningful and creative work." Increased specialization has fragmented work, making it seem routine and boring, unable to express or develop a sense of wholeness in the self. Rigid job definitions make workers seem to be interchangeable parts, ready to be downsized at any moment. Vest sees these difficulties, but she prefers to regard them as challenges. We are challenged to understand our work not just as a call to do something (that may, in many respects, be routine and boring) but as a call to part-

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nership with God in caring for the creation. She also grants, however, that many people are likely to find that no single activity satisfies them wholly, and she encourages us to use free time in ways that develop aspects of the self for which our work makes little place. Although this suggestion stands in some tension with the claim that work itself is the friend of the soul, it nevertheless seems wise.

(B3) "Work is the friend of the soul" is Vest's preferred translation of the first sentence of chapter 48 of Benedict's Rule. But, as she notes, this sentence is more commonly translated, "Idleness is the enemy of the soul." That has a rather different ring, and these are not simply two ways of saying the same thing. If one ought to work because "idleness is the enemy of the soul," if that is work's point, we should not necessarily look to the realm of work for fulfillment and wholeness. Instead, we might think of work, however irksome and burdensome, as a necessary discipline for those too ready to concentrate only on their own fulfillment. Indeed, from this perspective we might understand the fragmented and routine quality of much work—a quality Vest is careful to note—as an indication that fulfillment must be sought elsewhere. Marx's hope that, once the alienation engendered by a fragmented workplace is overcome, a man might hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, and be a critic in the evening—might, in short, be whole—asks more of the realm of work than it can offer.

(A4) Throughout the book Vest offers examples drawn from life of people who have found strategies for dealing with a workplace in which competition and production are king. "Stephen" uses his savings to take a leave of absence from work in order to test his growing sense that his true calling is to be a spiritual guide. He practices a certain kind of detachment that the Benedictine Rule recommends. "Jim," a minister, decides to pass by opportunities for a larger congregation, preferring the extra time for his children and the small church community he enjoys. "Clarice," a successful real estate broker with a horse-farm in the country, gets caught in a failing economy and loses her business. After some hard personal times, however, she finds a satisfying position that pays far less but uses some of her skills while still leaving more time for her family and her horse. Whatever the circumstances of work, we need a capacity that Vest finds in the Rule and calls "tender competence"—a condition in which we are neither entirely helpless nor entirely in charge. "If we are fully in charge, there is no place for God's action. If we are completely helpless, we refuse not only God's desire to work in our midst, but also the opportunities before us and our own competence to engage them."

(B4) The contemporary workplace can, of course, be a hard and unforgiving arena, and each person must find his own way to make peace with that fact. Granting this, however, it is striking that most of the short vignettes with which Vest sprinkles her exposition are examples of people cutting back, detaching, and, in a certain sense, achieving less. In that sense, this is a book for those saddest of our contemporaries—the driven professionals who have made an idol of their work. But is the answer to such idolatry simply changed patterns that allow more time for the families we have neglected and the private pursuits we enjoy? Or is the answer a genuine conversion that frees us for vocation—a vocation from which we do not detach ourselves but in service of which we offer the whole of our powers? If God intends to fulfill us through such vocation, it will be a fulfillment that comes the other side of the cross that threatens to break us. Not self-fulfillment but self-spending is the first—and the daily—claim that vocation makes upon us.

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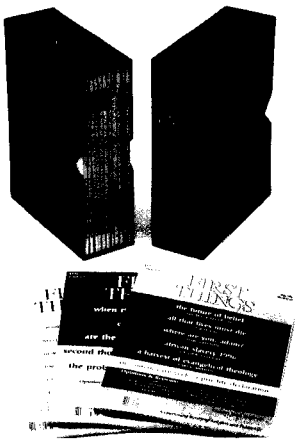

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Spinoza's Project

SPINOZA, LIBERALISM, AND THE QUESTION OF JEWISH IDENTITY. By STEVEN B. SMITH. *Yale University Press. 270 pp. $30.*

Reviewed by **Alan Mittleman**

SPINOZA HAS HAD an umistakable appeal for free thinkers—Jewish and gentile—over the past two centuries, and his appeal seems greatest when a rigorous institutionalized faith collides with a secular fervor. Thus, in the tense atmosphere of Israel's culture wars, Spinoza has emerged as something of a hero figure for secularists. Such philosophers as Gershon Weiler and Yirmiyahu Yovel have claimed Spinoza as the first modern Jew, the first theorist of a secular Jewish state, and the first Jew to intuit the possibility of a wholly secular Jewishness. Insofar as Spinoza worked out his theory of a liberal society in terms of a struggle with the political claims of Jewish law he seems oddly contemporary. At least in Israel. At least for secularists.

For all that, it is odd that even Israeli secularists should embrace Spinoza, since he had such harsh and contemptuous things to say about Judaism. His criticisms are standard tropes in the "recurring pattern," as Nathan Rotenstreich put it, of philosophical anti-Semitism. At the end of the day, a thorough and truly radical critique of most of what Jews have held sacred should not appear, even to Israeli secularists, as entirely sanguine.

American Jews, with little experience of either the fierce anti-clericalism that Israel inherited from Europe or state-established Jewish religion, can afford to treat Spinoza with the ambivalence he deserves. An uncompromising advocate of freedom of opinion and one of the first of the great modern political theorists to argue for the superiority of democracy, Spinoza offers much to be esteemed. But he also offers much to be deplored, advocating in somewhat encrypted fashion the dismantling of revealed religion and its replacement by a positive, secular civil religion. From Spinoza's elevated metaphysical point of view, all revealed religions are sects. In the seventeenth century in which he wrote, when the wars of religion were not a distant memory, debunking and controlling sects seemed a small price for a rational, educated, strife-free civil society. At the end of the twentieth century, however, the problems in Spinoza's settlement of religion and politics are far more apparent.

STEVEN SMITH'S new study of Spinoza's political teaching reflects more enthusiasm than ambivalence, but ambivalence is not lacking. Smith wants to present a Spinoza equal in stature to his great contemporaries, Locke and Hobbes, and to establish him as a primary figure in democratic theory. He also wants to show that it was crucial to that theory to settle the question of religion in the modern polity, especially for Jews. Spinoza is the truly towering figure here, for (as Leo Strauss argued many years ago) modern Jews have never been able to free themselves from Spinoza's framing of the fundamental issue.

That fundamental issue is the question of revelation. Spinoza is radically opposed to the concept of revelation—to the idea that reason requires guidance from beyond its ken and to the claim that Scripture is the record of this gracious, divine guidance. Spinoza's *Theological-Political Tractate* is an assault on the Mosaic authorship, indeed, the divinity of Scripture.

The first half of Smith's study is a close and expert reading of Spinoza's scriptural interpretation. Spinoza was concerned to avoid both what Smith terms a "skeptical" and a "dogmatic" reading. ("Skeptical" in

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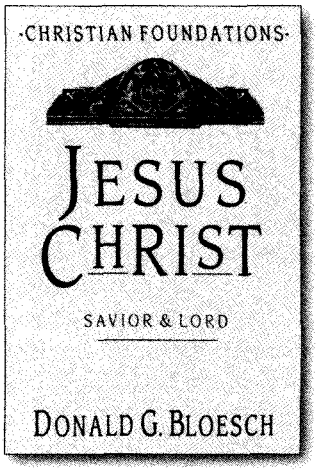

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this context means skeptical of reason.) We ought not, on Spinoza's account, to suspend our rational knowledge of the world and take, for example, biblical miracles at their face value. But neither should we follow Maimonides (a "dogmatist") and assume that Scripture always conforms to reason if only we interpret it allegorically. Spinoza does not want Scripture to be either a scandal to reason or an encoded philosophical text. He proposes, rather, a naturalistic hermeneutic through which the meaning of Scripture is allowed to emerge in its original setting. This is, essentially, the stand of modern hermeneutics: not truth, but meaning—text-in-historical-context—is what counts.

Convinced that Scripture is not about truth, Spinoza argues that it is instead the cultural product of the ancient Hebrews. Its "meaning" (Spinoza, like Kant who follows him on this score, believes that Scripture has an essential, overriding meaning) is moral: love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Almost all the rest is historical-cultural detritus to be jettisoned.

Nearly all the political thinkers of the seventeenth century read Scripture as a political text. But Spinoza went far beyond, for example, John Locke in his *First Treatise* or *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. Initiating the project of higher criticism, Spinoza inserted the Bible into the dimension of secular history, and ever since, few Jews, other than the most orthodox of the Orthodox, have managed to regain their confidence that the words of Torah are the words of God. But Spinoza not only framed the problem, but claimed to have found the solution in the liberal Jewish compensatory mechanism: the eternal commands of conscience, the moral law speaking through the text, are, as it were, the voice of God.

ONE OF THE merits of Smith's *Spinoza, Liberalism, and the Question of Jewish Identity* is that it brings out clearly the political aim of higher criticism in its Spinozist incarnation. Higher criticism is meant to reduce the authority of competing sects and clergies by reducing the authority of Scripture. In place of a scripture, contention over which foments civic unrest, the modern society proposes a rational religion that promotes civic peace.

Spinoza, like Rousseau who follows him, is convinced that civil society requires civil religion. He arrives at this conclusion in part for "Judaic" reasons. His critique of Scripture required a critique of prophecy, particularly of that philosophical version of prophecy promoted by Maimonides and other medievals. Spinoza had to argue that revelation (via prophecy) was not a higher form of knowledge, but an inferior (because imagination-driven) expression of natural knowledge. Revealed religion makes no defensible cognitive claims. Prophecy has more to do with the prophet's passional psychology than with objective reality. With Scripture thus severed from truth (or theoretical reason), what is left is a connection of Scripture with law and ethics (or practical reason). Scripture's main purpose was to stipulate moral and civil law for the ancient Israelite polity, and Judaism is thus a religion of law, its faith simply a posture of obedience to law.

By claiming that the emerging modern civil society requires a civil faith whose content is primarily a moral law inculcating obedience to the state, Spinoza turns civil religion into a caricature of Judaism, in effect turning all modern people into Jews: their "faith," whatever significance it may have for them on a personal level, is in fact merely a matter of obedience to the civil sovereign. This faith, like the faith of biblical Israelites, does not per se bring happiness. It does, however, secure civil peace within which individuals can work out their happiness. For Spinoza, the best civil state is a democratic, commercial republic where citizens have access to education and commercial opportunity against a background of legally secured liberty. And civil faith is a foundation of this civil society.

Spinoza places an extraordinary value on the freedom of the autonomous individual. He is the true prophet of the liberated, modern self. For this reason, as Smith points out, Spinoza endorses democratic republicanism more fervently than earlier contract theorists. Spinozist politics is not simply about the avoidance of civil strife, as Hobbes had argued. Politics has a positive

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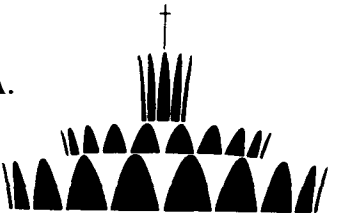

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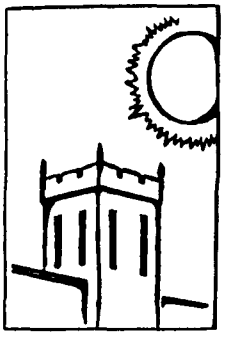

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role to play. But insofar as Spinoza has broken with the Jewish political tradition (best represented by Maimonides) and its adaptation of the Greek virtuous republic, what is left to him is an endorsement of the modern commercial republic with its mass society, privacy, and individuality. Spinoza endorses democracy because he believes that it affords the best environment for freedom of thought, and thus for individual perfection.

But because Spinoza breaks with the tradition of virtue, he denies politics a role in the achievement of perfection. Politics creates conditions of freedom such that individuals who are interested in perfection, namely philosophers, can pursue their project of a rational life. As to everyone else, politics creates freedom for them as well, but it also imposes strict limits through a powerful sovereign and the civil religion of obedience to him.

SPINOZA'S VISION of freedom is thus circumscribed for the masses and unbounded for the philosophers. In the end, his vision of human perfection (as a perfectly rational life focused on a God who is identical with nature) is deeply apolitical. His task was to convince society that it had nothing to fear from those who would pursue such a life.

Toward the end of his book, Smith does for Spinoza's politics and controverted image of Judaism what the Israeli philosopher Yirmiyahu Yovel has done for Spinoza's metaphysics, tracing their impact on the great thinkers of the European enlightenment. Smith shows how Spinoza's construction of Scripture and Judaism, and its role in the economy of the emerging liberal political theory he teaches, both endures in and is transformed by such figures as Lessing, Kant, and Hegel.

Somewhat less successful is Smith's effort to translate Spinoza into the American context. The influence and utility of his thought as an analytic and descriptive framework for American politics is open to doubt. Spinoza exemplifies a tradition of strong or unified sovereignty that is relatively foreign to American federalism. His distrust of revealed religion as a political force, whatever sense it had in Europe, is also not entirely at home in a country where Tocqueville described religion as the first of political institutions.

On the other hand, Smith makes a good case for Spinoza's ongoing pertinence. The issue he so powerfully framed—a universal common and civil faith versus competing particular loyalities—has surfaced again in the "identity politics" of modern multiculturalism. Arguing that he would be as critical of the race-sex-gender crowd as he was of the synagogue and the Protestant theocrats, Smith provocatively presents Spinoza as a critic of multiculturalism.

But perhaps Spinoza's lasting legacy is as a diagnostician of the condition of the people whose midst he left. Modern Judaism has never really escaped the horns of Spinoza's dilemma. While Jews followed Spinoza's advice and assimilated to a shared culture, Judaism transformed itself into an Enlightenment artifact that sought to give no offense. But this process of which Spinoza was herald and high priest is now in decline. Those Jews who refused the Spinozist offer seem resurgent. The question remains whether they can pursue a theology and a politics of revelation without the superstition, obscurantism, and theocratic authoritarianism that Spinoza rightly decried. And though Spinoza diagnosed the problem, he cannot provide a compelling contemporary solution. He does, however, offer a clear picture of the issues and stakes involved.

The Coming Crisis

FORCED EXIT: THE SLIPPERY SLOPE FROM ASSISTED SUICIDE TO LEGALIZED MURDER. By WESLEY J. SMITH. *Times Books. 291 pp. $25.*

Reviewed by **Michael M. Uhlmann**

AMERICAN SOCIETY may soon embark upon the most important constitutional debate since the early nineteenth century. Then the issue was

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slavery, and the question was whether one human being may own property in another; now the issue is assisted suicide, and the question is whether one human being may take another's life with impunity. Both questions draw us back to the central propositions that establish the American constitutional order: that there is an order of rights antecedent to the state and that government is bound, as a condition of its legitimacy, to secure those rights against the predations of those who would deny or abolish them. Must the state protect all human lives, or may some be snuffed out with the tacit or express consent of the government? More precisely: does the Constitution sanction the private use of lethal force, and if so, how can that understanding be squared with the unalienable character of the rights bestowed upon us by the laws of nature and nature's God?

Debate on this point should have been joined a generation ago, but the Supreme Court's ukase in *Roe v. Wade* obscured the full gravity of the critical issue. By declaring that it was unnecessary to decide when human life begins, and by refusing to inquire into what or, more precisely, who is being killed when the woman exercises her "right to choose," the Court made it possible to pretend that abortion was in effect a victimless crime. What course the abortion debate might have taken but for this convenient legal fiction, we shall never know.

What we have learned from the abortion controversy is that the legitimation of killing in Case A makes it progressively easier to justify killing in Cases B and C and D. When the argument for liberalization first surfaced, we were told that the procedure would be rarely used, and only in the most necessitous circumstances. It was not long, however, before one woman's necessity turned out to be another's convenience, and abortion on demand became the order of the day. Twenty-five years and thirty-five million abortions later, a government commission feels free to recommend the creation of human beings for the sole and explicit purpose of biological experimentation, and a President of the United States can feel equally free to defend infanticide in the form of partial-birth abortion.

THAT MORE COURTS have not extended the argument of the abortion cases to other forms of human killing testifies more to their reticence than to their powers of deduction. No such reticence was apparent, however, in Judge Stephen Reinhardt's opinion for the Ninth Circuit declaring a constitutional right to assisted suicide. He explicitly linked the rationale for assisted suicide to that for abortion, arguing that the Supreme Court's decisions in *Roe* and *Casey* effectively compelled him to do so. Although the High Court unanimously reversed the Ninth Circuit this past June, a close reading of the Justices' opinions confirms that a majority will not soon abandon the precedents on which Judge Reinhardt relied. Thus, while the Chief Justice insisted that assisted suicide is a matter for the states to decide, five of his colleagues made clear that this resolution may be good for the time-being only. In a word, Judge Reinhardt's opinion has been tamed, but hardly defeated.

If certain members of the judiciary seem prepared to lead us, gently or not, into that good night, how likely is it that the political order will ask them to cease and desist? Not very, says Wesley J. Smith, who argues convincingly in *Forced Exit* that the so-called "quality-of-life" ethic has already taken a toll on the nation's moral sensibilities and that, unless we were careful, we will be swept headlong into what John Paul II has so aptly called "the culture of death." Assisted suicide, Smith says, is only the opening wedge of an argument that will inexorably lead to involuntary euthanasia. Once it becomes licit for doctors to end their patients' lives for compassionate reasons in the case of terminal illness, what will stop that same compassion from administering death to those who, although not terminally ill, are suffering from intractable pain? If there is in fact a constitutional right to die, how can it be denied to those who are comatose? And if deliverance by death is thought to be an appropriate beneficence for the senile elderly, why is it not equally appropriate for medically compromised children who face a lifetime of pain and debilitation? Indeed, why must one be a "patient" at all? Why shouldn't all the arguments apply with equal force to those who are not ill, but have nevertheless been reduced by the vicissitudes of life to the point where they simply no longer wish to live?

TO BE SURE, the answers to these questions may not always line up in the same direction, even under a regime of assisted suicide. But merely to ask them is to suggest how easily the justification for killing can be extended to an ever-widening category of eligible candidates—and how easily the line between the voluntary and the involuntary can be erased. One need not, however, rely on abstract argument alone. *Forced Exit* is filled with chilling episodes drawn from actual cases. If you are at all dubious about slippery slope arguments in this area, Smith's catalogue of real-life examples will cure your doubts once and for all. In the rosy portraits of assisted suicide drawn by the likes of the Hemlock Society, cool-headed patients put their affairs in order, make their peace with Heaven, and drift away peacefully to the dulcet strains of their favorite music, surrounded by loved ones and kindly, compassionate medical assistants. In the real world, Smith demonstrates that patients requesting assisted death are more likely to be suffering from untreated depression, and are more likely to be cajoled into their decision by family members and medical personnel with decidedly mixed motives.

The book contains a fine chapter

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on the corruption of German medical ethics during the Weimar Republic. It was then that the medical and legal justifications for assisted suicide and euthanasia took root—a decade or more before the Nazis came on the scene. Significantly, the arguments we hear today are virtually brick-by-brick the same as those advocated by respectable German elites nearly eighty years ago. There was the argument from autonomy (the patient has a right to die); the argument from compassion (the patient is suffering); and the argument from utility (family and society would be relieved of burdens if the patient ceased to live). Each of these has a force of its own; together, they make killing morally plausible and socially acceptable. Implications that escaped many earnest intellectuals were understood immediately by Hitler when he instituted his infamous euthanasia program in the 1930s. This is not to imply that people who advocate assisted suicide are like the Nazis; it is to say that their premises have a life far beyond what they may intend. For a less odious example closer to our own time, Smith points to the Netherlands of today, where the courts have made a habit of looking the other way as doctors dispatch patients—with and without their consent.

For those who say this sort of thing can't happen here, Smith points out that nihilism and its more respectable cousin, relativism, have already rooted themselves in American soil. When moral disarmament combines with the perverse incentives of contemporary health-care financing, many people may be seduced into thinking that assisted suicide makes not only moral but economic sense.

While Smith's analysis is on target, his remedy (more government regulation and financing of health care) may exacerbate the very disease he wishes to cure: what makes him think that government bean-counters will want to pay to keep people alive? He would be on surer ground if he examined why Medicare and Medicaid, as now constituted, make health-care rationing inevitable. One might also wish that Smith had paid more attention to the Supreme Court's abortion jurisprudence. It is through those cases, after all, that the radical individualism and nihilism he decries have entered the nation's cultural and constitutional bloodstream. These points notwithstanding, Smith excels in his detailed and powerful exposition of how the world of assisted suicide is likely to work in fact.

For all the moral desiccation of recent times, there is no reason to believe that the American people, once fully and fairly informed of what is at stake, cannot rouse themselves to resist the siren song of assisted suicide. *Forced Exit* is a fine place for them to begin their education—the sooner the better.

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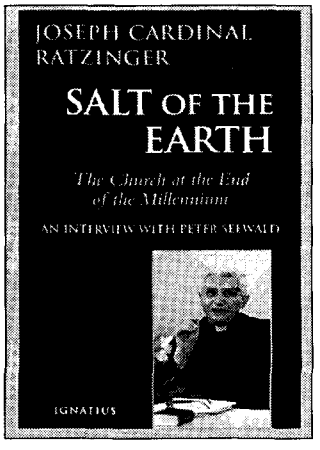
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Do Only Christians Know?

CHRISTIANS AMONG THE VIRTUES. THEOLOGICAL CONVERSATIONS WITH ANCIENT AND MODERN ETHICS. By STANLEY HAUERWAS and CHARLES PINCHES. *University of Notre Dame Press. 230 pp. $29.95 cloth, $16.95 paper.*

Reviewed by **Jerry L. Walls**

VIRTUE IS MAKING a comeback. The success of William Bennett's *The Book of Virtues* in 1994 is perhaps the most notable indicator of this fact, but the "virtuecrats"—the politicians and public figures who have made careers of promoting virtue—produced enough of a splash to make the cover of *Newsweek* some time back. And on its face, this is surely a good thing that Christians should applaud warmly.

In their new book, however, the Christian theologians Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches express considerable reservation about the current revival of interest in virtue. The reasons for their reservation will be apparent to readers familiar with any of Hauerwas' other work. Convinced that Christianity is a distinctive community with a distinctive narrative and distinctive practices, the authors declare that "One of the main burdens of the book is to argue that the virtues Christianly considered are in fundamental ways different from the virtues associated with quite different practices, communities, and narratives."

The book is divided into three sections. The first section consists of three chapters of "theological reflections on Aristotelian themes." The next section responds to contemporary exponents of virtue: Alasdair MacIntyre, Martha Nussbaum, and John Casey. The final section, which the authors consider most crucial to their case, is devoted to examining particular Christian virtues.

THE OPENING section's material on Aristotle is foundational for the author's project, not only because Aristotle's account of the virtues has been influential in both philosophy and theology, but also because the critique of Aristotle sets the tone for the rest of the book. The broad purpose of these chapters is to show the "complex relation between happiness, temporality, and virtue." Unashamedly concerned with happiness in his ethics, Aristotle provides us with a powerful picture of how the virtues are necessary for happiness.

It is easy enough to see affinities between the Christian life and the Aristotelian life, and theologians have often attempted to synthesize the two. But even more interesting than the affinities are the contrasts Hauerwas and Pinches draw between Aristotle and Christianity. The contrast comes into focus when the authors compare how friendship is understood in the two traditions. Aristotle recognized the need for friends if we are to become virtuous. It is not the case that we must first become virtuous and then seek out similarly virtuous friends. In Aristotle's view, as the authors put it, "friendship itself is an activity by which we acquire the kind of steadfastness necessary for our being true friends." There are, however, limits to friendship among the magnanimous men who epitomize virtue for Aristotle, for essential to the virtue of the magnanimous man is the notion that it is better to give than to receive. This has far-reaching implications if such a man is struck by misfortune or adversity so that he can no longer give to others. In this case, the man must insulate himself from his friends to protect them from sharing his suffering.

The contrast with Christianity could hardly be more profound. Christians worship a God who befriended us while we were in deepest need and displayed this friendship most vividly while hanging on a cross. "Here it is assumed that friends will suffer with friends, indeed, that friends will suffer *because* of friends, as the disciples will suffer for Jesus' sake."

AT THE OUTSET of the second section of the book, Hauerwas and Pinches remind us that they have "no stake in defending virtue as a thing in itself." Indeed, to defend virtue that way may result, for the Christian, in defending what is vicious. Examining the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, the authors echo one of MacIntyre's famous titles and insist: "If someone asserts that striving after virtue will bring one closer to God, Christians are obliged to ask: what virtues? and which God?"

Rather than attack him directly, Hauerwas and Pinches do so indirectly by summarizing John Milbank's critique of MacIntyre. In particular, they are interested in Milbank's challenge to the notion that a "universally compelling philosophical case can be made for the ascendancy of virtue." Milbank is especially critical of MacIntyre's attempt to defend Christianity by the allegedly universal method of dialectics. That is, he is skeptical of the attempt to show that Christianity is true by demonstrating that it is more consistent than its rivals, resolves more problems, and so on.

Moreover, Milbank believes MacIntyre has a problem *as a Christian* in urging a return to virtue as understood by Plato and Aristotle. The ancient philosophers' view of virtue is fundamentally heroic and situated in a context of conflict and the defense of the polis by violence. By contrast, the Christian picture of virtue has as its end not domination but liberation. "As such it transcends a model of the person whose telos involves the practice and perfection of the virtues of conflict, and it offers the new political possibilities of mutuality and community that previously were inconceivable."

The discussions of Nussbaum and Casey further develop the point that there are fundamental differences between Christian and Greek accounts of virtue. The critique of Nussbaum shows that Christianity

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does not share her conception of the fragility of human love and friendship. Christians neither place the same sort of positive value on fragility Nussbaum does nor think goodness—in a world created by a gracious God whose good purposes will finally prevail—is as vulnerable as Nussbaum imagines. Hauerwas and Pinches put the point succinctly: "Christians' affirmations of the fragility of goodness must always be qualified by their eschatalogical convictions." The chapter on the contemporary philosopher John Casey points out some of the difficulties in his project of reviving such pagan virtues as anger, pride, and courage when we lack a modern context equivalent to the ancient setting in which these virtues flourished and made sense.

THE FINAL SECTION of *Christians Among the Virtues* begins with an account of the hopeful virtues, beginning with Paul's classic statement of justification by faith in Romans 5 and raising the question of how virtue relates to justification. Hauerwas and Pinches show how distinctively Christian doctrines such as the resurrection of Jesus radically shape the way Christians construe suffering, forgiveness, endurance, and the formation of character. The next chapter examines the sense in which obedience is a virtue from a Christian perspective. Then follows a discussion of courage that points out how Christian resources transform and subvert notions of courage defined by the context of battle. The book concludes with a suggestive treatment of patience in relation to modern medicine. Here the authors explore, among other things, the irony of our still being called patients by the medical profession "given the impatience which so imbues the modern practice of medicine and the social order it serves."

Consistently provocative and rich with insight, the book deserves a wide audience. Philosophers as well as theologians will find much in it to stimulate their thinking and challenge their convictions. There are numerous passages in the book that edify and even some that are religiously moving.

Christians Among the Virtues is not without its difficulties, however. For instance, the authors often mention their rejection of universal modes of argument. They have little patience with the notion that there might be universally acknowledged means of resolving disputes, and their rejection of universals is often accompanied by expressions of disdain for liberalism.

While certain strands and developments within the liberal tradition richly deserve all the scorn Hauerwas and Pinches can muster, it is much less clear that the idea of universal standards of rationality should be jettisoned as well. They are quite correct, not to mention historically sensitive, to recognize the distinctiveness of various traditions, their particular locations, and specific shapes—and that goes for the Christian tradition as much as for any other. But this cannot be the last word if one also believes Christianity is true, and true in the deepest sense, as Hauerwas and Pinches clearly do.

Similarly, the authors are surely correct in claiming that "differing accounts of the virtues rest on differing claims about the way things are." As they show, distinctively Christian truth claims alter the shape of the virtues. The question, however, is whether there are universally accessible considerations that show the preferability of the Christian vision of reality—a vision that consists of the Christian account of "the way things are" and the corresponding picture of virtue.

It is odd, to say the least, to think the Christian story of creation and redemption, with its extraordinary implications for all persons, could really be true without its truth being discernible, at least in significant part, to any properly informed seeker of truth. Perhaps a hopeful pointer for resolving this issue lies in the authors' comment that "sin and redemption, while universal, are imbedded in a particular history, one we must come to share if we are to know our true state." The point is, Christians believe that universal truths have been revealed in a particular history. If the true state of all persons is indeed that they are sinful and in need of the redemption Christianity provides, then surely there must be considerations that point all persons to the truth of the story that illumine the meaning of their lives and the way they ought to live.

In *Christians Among the Virtues*, Hauerwas and Pinches convincingly argue that Christianity offers a very different account of the virtues. But they leave us wondering why, if that account is true, it is only accessible to those who have made a prior commitment to Christianity.

Explaining Everything

MORAL JUDGMENT: DOES THE ABUSE EXCUSE THREATEN OUR LEGAL SYSTEM? By JAMES Q. WILSON. *Basic Books. 134 pp. $18.*

***Reviewed by* J. Budziszewski**

JAMES Q. WILSON has written an important book that is almost certain to be misunderstood in ways that conceal both its strengths and weaknesses. Though it brilliantly analyzes the effect of the "abuse excuse" upon our legal system, it ultimately undermines the basis of moral judgment. In so doing, it keeps the promise of its subtitle—demolishing the "abuse excuse"—while defeating the promise of its title—defending "moral judgment."

According to the author, the basic principle of our law is that people are accountable for their actions. To be sure, there are a few exceptions: in the case of murder, for example, we recognize justifications such as self-defense, excuses such as insanity, and mitigations such as provocation. Traditionally, however, these exceptions have been narrowly de-

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fined and strictly limited. That is just how it should be, for the task of law is "to raise, not lower, the ante" in the circumstances that tempt us: law must be unkind, and the greater the temptation, the sterner and more unkind it should be.

Of course, as the stern mills of the law are grinding out their unkind judgments they sometimes have need of expert testimony, and herein lies the danger. So long as experts deal in "hard" knowledge like whether the fibers found on the heels of the defendant's shoes came from the clothing of the victim, their testimony is helpful. But when they are allowed to give their opinions as to "soft" matters like whether being beaten as a child predisposed the defendant to beating people as an adult, the focus of proceedings shifts from judgment to explanation. In the sciences, of course, explanation is the goal. But in an institution whose purpose is to determine legal culpability, *explaining* can mean only *explaining away*. Those rare and narrowly crafted justifications, excuses, and mitigations are steadily multiplied and enlarged, until the principle of accountability itself seems in danger of being swept away.

THIS SHIFT from judgment to explanation is the source of the "abuse excuse" that has become so disturbingly familiar from press coverage of high-profile trials. Don't blame me: I was drunk, high, full of steroids. It wasn't my fault: I'm a battered woman, an urban survivor, a victim of sexual abuse. I couldn't help it: I was full of black rage, suffering from post-traumatic stress, caught up in the mentality of the mob. I wasn't responsible: I've got learned helplessness, XYY chromosomes, a rotten social background. I wasn't myself: it was the pornography, the junk food, the premenstrual stress.

Here is the first point at which Wilson's book will be misunderstood. Indeed, even one of the worthies quoted on the back cover has got it wrong: Wilson does *not* argue that "the criminal justice system has become a kind of theater of the absurd" with murder "explained away by arguments like having a bad day." In fact he maintains just the opposite. "Contrary to what many suppose," he says, "there is no avalanche of 'abuse excuses' afflicting American criminal law." Such ingenious defenses are seldom mounted and even more seldom succeed. Only in the splashiest cases—in trials where someone has the money to pay for the skilled lawyers and expert witnesses that are necessary to make them credible—do they make any headway at all.

And yet, though the abuse excuse is rarely successful, there are two good reasons to dwell on it. First, the very fact that it succeeds only in the presence of the catalyst of money shows how easily the law can be distorted by wealth. Second, and more important, these trials exhibit in exaggerated form what is also happening on a smaller scale throughout the criminal justice system: "Though no avalanche has occurred," Wilson observes, "the courts are having difficulty keeping their footing on a slope that has become increasingly slippery." What greases the slope is the notion that "since crime is socially caused, personal responsibility is diminished."

ALL OF THIS is persuasive, but here is the second point at which the book will be misunderstood—and this is where I think the author undermines his own project of talking about moral judgment. Wilson does not argue that crime is *not caused*. He is a thoroughgoing determinist; for what some people call free will there is no room in his view of things at all. "There is no reason to think," he says, that actions like "intentional thought, speech, and social behavior" are "any less caused than the patellar reflex"—the inherited disposition that causes your leg to jerk when your knee is struck. Indeed, "if we knew enough about my genetic endowment and childhood socialization, the opportunities and incentives available to me and the beliefs and principles by which I evaluate them, we could fully explain why I am sitting here writing this chapter." True, we cannot *now* predict human behavior with much precision, and courtroom experts who say they can are pretenders. But "some day, in fact, we may have such a theory," and if we don't, it won't be because of free will.

Now things become complicated, for Wilson has presented us with a paradox. All behavior is caused, yet somehow we are accountable for it; everything we do could in principle be explained by antecedent conditions, yet in all but the rarest cases (in fact, just those cases to which the traditional exceptions to the principle of legal accountability apply) a person "could have acted other than as he did." How can these contraries be reconciled? By way of answer the author says things like, "A cause is not an excuse except insofar as the cause deprives the person of reason or forces a person to act." There is something puzzling here. If the way I think when I am not deprived of reason is determined by antecedent causes just as tightly as the way I think when I am deprived of it, then what difference does it make whether I am deprived of it or not? And doesn't *every* true cause "force" me to act? What else *is* a cause but something that forces something else to happen?

Wilson is too smart a thinker simply to contradict himself. What he is getting at may be something like the following. In deciding whether to hold a man accountable for something he did, Wilson seems to think we shouldn't ask *whether his choice was free*, but *whether his act was avoidable*. Suppose one day you get out a gun and shoot me just for fun. Clearly your act was avoidable—you could have acted other than as you did, not in the sense that the choice was free, but in the sense that the choice made a difference. That is, had you chosen differently, the shooting would not have taken place. Now change the illustration—you still shoot me, but for a different reason. Someone has forced a gun into your hand, twisted your wrist until the muzzle pointed at me, and muscled your finger against the trigger. This time your act was not

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avoidable—you could not have acted other than as you did, not in the sense that the choice was unfree, but in the sense that the choice didn't make a difference. Had you chosen differently, the shooting would have taken place anyway.

JUST SUCH A WAY of thinking was proposed by philosopher C. L. Stevenson in the 1940s. Could it be that Wilson is a Stevensonian? It would certainly explain how he can believe that all of our choices are completely determined by their causes, yet consider those causes irrelevant to the determination of legal culpability. Not only that, the traditional exceptions to legal culpability, which Wilson wants to preserve, correspond precisely to the circumstances in which our acts are not avoidable. Consider for example the traditional insanity defense: If I shoot my brother while out of my mind, under the delusion that he is really a ravening lion, my act is unavoidable because a choice not to shoot my brother can make no difference to what I actually do; that's not what I think I am doing anyway. But in all cases where actions are avoidable—where my choices do make a difference to what I do—it makes sense for the law to become one of causal influences upon my choices by sternly threatening me with punishment for choosing wrongly.

Stevensonian or not, this much, at any rate, is clear: for Wilson, the fact that my behavior is caused does not make me unaccountable. Rather it is a *condition* of my being accountable, because accountability means susceptibility to causal influence by the law itself. Penalties are sensible not because of freedom, but because of determination. The crux of the matter is that law is a control system. It is an unusual one—one that works by the internalization of external norms, by "focusing," as Wilson puts it, what we quaintly call our "self" control—but it is a control system nonetheless.

This view presents a deep difficulty. If law is *reconceived* as a sheer control system, then of course it can survive the denial of free will. And yet one cannot help thinking that Wilson does not want the control system to be sheer. He wants it to be *moral*—to fulfill the promise of his title—to reflect the notions of sympathy, duty, self-control, and fairness that he has discussed so interestingly in other works. Now it is one thing for a control system to survive the denial of free will. But it is quite another for moral obligation to survive it. If the world is to be matter in motion, then one must explain how *ought* is a property of matter. And though James Q. Wilson has not yet taken up the project of explaining this, when he does, he will find it a very tough row to hoe.

BRIEFLY NOTED

A SACRED UNION OF CITIZENS: GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS AND THE AMERICAN CHARACTER. By MATTHEW SPALDING and PATRICK J. GARRITY. *Rowman & Littlefield. 217 pp. $27.95.*

Political scientists who study only the Constitution typically claim America's founding derives from the analysis of rights and freedoms found in the Lockean tradition. And it is certainly true that the Constitution echoes the Declaration of Independence in seeing government as existing primarily to secure rights. But an Aristotelian and classical tradition was known to the Founders as well, and that tradition ranks political communities according to the virtues or character the laws encourage in citizens. This volume by Matthew Spalding and Patrick J. Garrity shows the extent to which George Washington tied personal character to national greatness—and thereby made himself the most Aristotelian of the Founders. Washington's Farewell Address in fact offers the finest example of Aristotelian bent, imparting his mature observations about what we should do to maintain free government. He wanted Americans to become more than fellow citizens united only by law; each citizen must acquire and practice virtue in order to preserve republicanism. Perhaps Washington's loftiest hope was a worldwide moral transformation led by an American republic of unparalleled moral excellence. Though the foreign policy recommendations of his Farewell Address were taken, after the Civil War, to promote isolationism, he was in fact, claim the authors, arguing the advantages of neutrality for independent action. Jefferson and Madison included the Farewell Address on the University of Virginia's short list of "the best guides to the distinctive principles" of American government, and it can still, as Spalding and Garrity show, supply prudent guidance for foreign and domestic issues. Forget the policy manuals churned out by the Washington think tanks. Washington himself is much more rewarding.

—Dennis Teti

THE GREAT TRADITION: EVANGELICALS, CATHOLICS, AND ORTHODOX IN DIALOGUE. Edited by JAMES S. CUTSINGER. *InterVarsity. 214 pp. $18.99.*

"Let all the anti-ecumenical forces of the Christian World unite!" proclaimed James Cutsinger at the opening of the "Not of This World" conference held at the Aiken, South Carolina, campus of Rose Hill College in May 1995. The conference brought together traditionalist Christians from across the spectrum—all the sort that usually disdain ecumenism as debilitating and vacuous. Participants hoped to discover what united strength could be discovered in the ancient faith all shared, particularly for fighting the culture war. This volume collects papers from the main presenters—including J. I. Packer, Kallistos Ware, Peter Kreeft, Carl Braaten, and Richard John Neuhaus—together with responses by others and notes on the lively discussion that followed each paper. Rose Hill is a chiefly Orthodox institution, and this conference and volume bring or-

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thodoxy—both upper and lower case—into an effort to express more fully the only ecumenism that matters: unity in the truth, which is to say, in the One who is the Truth. Warmly recommended.

— *Frederica Mathewes-Green*

DEFEATING DARWINISM BY OPENING MINDS. By PHILLIP E. JOHNSON. *InterVarsity. 132 pp. $15.99 cloth, $9.99 paper.*

When the Supreme Court struck down "balanced treatment" of creation and evolution in public schools ten years ago, the Justices hoped they had closed the issue. Instead, they guaranteed that Darwinism would become part of the culture war. Rather than being a subject for rational discussion in the classroom, Darwinism is now protected orthodoxy—and has acquired all the bad habits of an established religion. Phillip Johnson, law professor at the University of California at Berkeley and author of two earlier books on Darwinism, hopes to teach readers to spot those bad habits and restore rational debate. His prime complaint is that Darwinism promotes philosophy under the guise of science. Evolution as understood by the scientific establishment is simply materialist philosophy applied to biology. And because the underlying commitment is philosophical, the flimsiest facts are counted as evidence—as when the president of the National Academy of Sciences recently published an article arguing that evolution is confirmed by differences in the size of finch beaks, as though the sprawling evolutionary drama from biochemicals to the human brain could rest on instances of trivial, limited variation. Johnson is convinced that detecting such fallacies would go a long way toward defeating Darwinism. In this lively, tightly written book for a general audience, he teaches readers to train their "baloney detectors" on the doublethink, ad hominems, rhetorical tricks, and logical gaps that characterize the public propaganda for Darwinism.

— *Nancy R. Pearcey*

DOING THEOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD: STUDIES IN HONOR OF J. I. PACKER. Edited by DONALD LEWIS and ALISTER MCGRATH. *InterVarsity. 280 pp. $22.99 paper.*

For nearly a half century J. I. Packer has served as perhaps the most distinguished theologian in the Reformed evangelical community. His major writings have examined such serious theological topics as the doctrine of God, the doctrine of Scripture, the work of the Holy Spirit, Puritan theology, and the personal applications of Reformed theology for everyday life. His career changed dramatically in 1973, however, with the publication of *Knowing God,* a volume that sold over a million copies and remains in print twenty-five years later. It established Packer not just as a man the theologians knew and respected but as a name known at every level of the evangelical world. This collection of fifteen essays—with such distinguished contributors as Alister McGrath, John R. W. Stott, Mark A. Noll, James M. Houston, Colin Brown, Kenneth Kantzer, Bruce Waltke, and Roger Nicole—is published in honor of Packer's seventieth birthday and pays due honor to an exemplary scholar whose distinguished career has had such wide influence. As the editors observe: "Like so many great theologians, he has been drawn into controversy out of pastoral concerns, intensely aware of the fact that bad theology damages people. He has sought, however, in all of the controversies in which he has been involved, to be a peacemaker and a true Christian ecumenist."

— *Michael Cromartie*

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE. By GREGORY WOLFE. *Eerdmans. 462 pp. $35.*

This is the biography that is necessary for pinning down all the details often skirted in other writing about Muggeridge, who became—to use a much overused term—an icon of brilliantly curmudgeonly saintliness for millions. When he was a college student, the author drove Muggeridge to lecture engagements in the Midwest and fell permanently under his spell. Late in a rather dissolute life, "St. Mugg" turned to Christianity and then entered into communion with the Catholic Church. As a Christian apologist, he hardly belongs in the league of G. K. Chesterton and C. S. Lewis where Wolfe wants to put him, but he no doubt prompted many to consider the Christian possibility, and others to live it. Through television and the book *Something Beautiful for God,* he helped bring Mother Teresa to world attention, which is no little contribution. And he was right from the start in exposing the sham of Western apologists for the evil empire of the Soviet Union. Muggeridge charmed, provoked, and instructed a large part of a generation on the really important questions, and Gregory Wolfe's tribute is amply deserved.

THE TWO CITIES OF GOD: THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EARTHLY CITY. Edited by CARL E. BRAATEN and ROBERT W. JENSON. *Eerdmans. 152 pp. $18.*

St. Augustine's enduring conception of the two cities here receives contemporary development and application as outstanding authors, most of whom are also FIRST THINGS contributors, address economics, the academy, natural law, politics, and marriage: Robert Jenson on the Church's responsibility, Robert Louis Wilken on what Augustine really meant, Carl Braaten on natural law, George Weigel on not despairing about the ambiguity of politics, Robert Benne on Christian engagement in economic enterprise, and Gilbert Meilaender on the virtue of marriage. The essays are accessible, clearly argued, and reflect a realism that avoids both cynicism and delusion. An excellent text for courses or study groups on what the Church can and cannot do to care for the world of which we are part.

DIVIDED MEMORY: THE NAZI PAST IN THE TWO GERMANYS. By JEFFREY HERF. *Harvard University Press. 527 pp. $29.95.*

A fascinating account of how Marx-

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ist ideology hobbled East Germany's very limited efforts to come to terms with its Nazi and anti-Semitic past. Being, by definition, anti-Fascist and having transcended bourgeois categories such as religion, Marxists in East Germany could confess no sins without flagrantly contradicting their consciousness of themselves. The West Germans, and especially the Christian Democrats, have an uneven but, by comparison, immeasurably superior record of taking historical account. A professor at Ohio University, Jeffrey Herf has written a thoughtful exercise in moral, cultural, and political analysis.

WORSHIP WITH ONE ACCORD: WHERE LITURGY AND ECUMENISM EMBRACE. By GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT. *Oxford University Press. 276 pp. $35.*

Methodist Wainwright is one of the world's leading scholars on worship and ecumenism. The subtitle gives the gist of an argument that explores the unexpected commonalties between Catholic sacramental life and understandings within Protestantism, especially in the Wesleyan tradition. Particularly valuable is the author's emphasis upon the Trinitarian character of Christian faith, and his cautions about subtle and not so subtle ways in which that character can be undermined.

Self-Portrait, 1998

He is actually very happy, which goes to explain
why unexpected tears fill his eyes.
His job is good, he's a teacher. Humanities.
The terms stretch out, but pass swiftly by.
He is not good-looking—his face is quite bland—
but he is very funny, and kind.
He falls in love two or three times a day;
it goes away in an hour.
The poems he used to write aren't readable anymore;
the ones he writes now are no better.
Thinking about politics, about his President, makes him angry.
So he thinks about politics all the time.
He loves his home town, where he grew up and lives;
he loves his wife, his child, his job:
This reads like a midlife crisis in verse,
he thinks. *But I'm too young.*
And besides, mortality doesn't bother him,
any more than anyone else.
The Incarnation of Christ is real to him,
explaining all else, itself unexplained.
"Love Me above all others," Christ said. "If not,
you are not worthy of Me."
I am not worthy, O Lord.
He reads a Protestant Bible every single day,
and Catholic thinkers by night:
Gilson, Maritain, Thomas, Thomas, Thomas—
his child is named Nathan Thomas.
His wife—she loves him, exasperatedly—
barely kept it from being Nathan Aquinas.
The money he makes she handles. He knows
if it were left to him they'd be poor.
To be poor—what about it? To live without
the house, two cars, the insurance and books—
to live like Jesus, Who had none of these things.
He doesn't think about it, at least not often.
He is actually very happy, which goes to explain
why unexpected tears fill his eyes.

Craig Payne

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

On Not Permitting the Other To Be Other

In addition to being wrongheaded, the book is simply wrong on so many scores. That may be a good reason for ignoring it entirely, except that it represents a viewpoint that is influential far beyond the number of people who hold it. The book is *Please Don't Wish Me a Merry Christmas: A Critical History of the Separation of Church and State* (New York University Press). I reviewed it for the *Times Literary Supplement*, but there is more that needs saying. Published by a reputable university press, the book is part of a series titled "Critical America," meaning "critical theory" that is sharply critical of America. Other books in the series examine racism, sexism, homophobia, and other favored multicult topics.

A wild ride through history with a deconstruction-bent postmodernist at the wheel has its risks, but it is not without its rewards. Behind an apparently frivolous title, Stephen Feldman, professor of law and political science at the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, has a serious thesis, and parts of it are true. It is true, for instance, that what has come to be called "the separation of church and state" is not an American creation ex nihilo but is a product of the efforts of two millennia to institutionalize the distinction between temporal and spiritual authority. Also true, and less of a truism, is the claim that, in American law, the separation of church and state has been interpreted in very Protestant terms, reflecting the individualistic view that religion is a matter of personal decision or preference. Feldman notes that this is not fair to the Jewish understanding of Judaism, and he is right about that. He fails to appreciate the extent to which it is also unfair to the Catholic and Orthodox understanding of Christianity.

Neither is one inclined to question Mr. Feldman's assertion that the separation of church and state is not entirely neutral in its consequences for different religions. The doctrine of separation does not obliterate the social reality of a country in which more than 90 percent of the people say they are Christian, 80 percent claim a church affiliation, and close to 50 percent say they go to church in any given week. It is the contention of Mr. Feldman's very angry book that this social reality makes the separation of church and state no more than a "legal facade" for perpetuating the "hegemony" and "cultural imperialism" of Christianity in American public life.

The Christian Disaster

"I am Jewish." That is the very first sentence of the book, from which the author believes his argument follows. It is necessary to understand, he says, that the story of Jesus, and especially of his death, was "intentionally fabricated" by his disciples who were "motivated chiefly by political interest," their main interest being to condemn Jews and Judaism. The Jew is the "other" against which Christianity defined itself, and continues to define itself. St. Paul declared Christianity "spiritual" and Judaism "carnal," and that doctrine has formed the entirety of Western history, including the Holocaust and America's present and oppressive political order. In this reconstruction of history, Mr. Feldman is guided also by revisionist Christian writers such as Rosemary Radford Ruether and John Dominic Crossan.

According to Mr. Feldman, Christianity is, in addition to being a lie, an exceedingly unattractive affair. It is a wonder that anybody has ever found it appealing, and inexplicable that it is professed by almost two billion people living today. Christianity is captive to a "dualism" that denigrates life, while Judaism affirms "the whole person" and "celebrates life." The only explanation proposed for Christianity's appeal is that people hate Jews. Whether they become Christian because they hate Jews or hate Jews as a result of becoming Christian is not entirely clear, although the latter would seem

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to be the case. If they don't know any Jews, they hate "the conceptual Jew," who is a construct of Christianity and gives birth to "unconscious anti-Semitism," which is the very worst kind. "The redefinition of Jews in the New Testament has generated and appeared to justify many subsequent imperialistic acts by Christians. . . . For nearly 2,000 years of Western history, Christian hegemonic power has been remarkably complete."

The bulk of the book is given over to a rambling account of the history of the West, accompanied by lavish, if eccentrically selective, documentation. The story of what is risibly called Western civilization is, quite simply, the story of Christian anti-Semitism. From Theodosius to Augustine, from Hildebrand to Aquinas, from the Renaissance to the Reformation, from the Enlightenment to Hitler and today's Christian Coalition, it is one long sorry tale of Christian hatred of Jews. True, Christians were frequently tolerant and protective of Jews, but that was only "to allow them to endure their subjugated and miserable lives"—in the hope that they would voluntarily convert to Christianity. True, there were good features of the Renaissance and Reformation, such as expanded education and the introduction of the printing press, but this only "facilitated the rapid spread of anti-Semitic anecdotes and accusations." True, there were periods when there were no Jews to hate, as in England for four hundred years after the expulsion of 1290, but that only inflamed hatred of "the conceptual Jew." And so forth. Mr. Feldman is relentless. Some, less kindly, might think him fanatical.

Reverse Election

From the beginning, says the author, Christianity "declared that the Jewish covenant always had been defective and that the Jews never had known God." In Mr. Feldman's telling one might gain the impression that Marcion (c. 85-160) was declared a Doctor of the Church rather than being condemned as a heretic for teaching that the God of the Old Testament is not the same God revealed in Jesus Christ. Implicit in the author's argument is also an ironic reversal and an elevation of Judaism despite, indeed because of, the ascendancy of Christianity. Judaism was once the elect people of God and the nations (goyim) were the "other." Now Christians claim to be the elect people and Jews are the goyim, the surrogate "other" of everything that is not Christian. In addition, what is not Christian must be anti-Christian, since Christianity invented and maintains its identity against the Jew. Thus it turns out that, precisely by its marginalization, Judaism is the very epicenter of world history in its resistance to the Christian hegemony. As I say, the wild ride is not without its reward in interesting, if unpersuasive, *ideas*.

The author evidences limited respect for such as Thomas Aquinas. Sharply limited. "Nevertheless," he writes, "if Thomas proved anything through his consummate efforts at synthesis, he proved that Christianity and Aristotelianism cannot be harmonized: they are incompatible. And ultimately, Thomas remained a Christian. Thomas' resolute commitment to Christianity manifested itself in (among other ways) his rote expression of standard Christian anti-Semitic dogma." Luther's notorious rantings against the Jews are well known, but for Feldman they are only a more overt expression of the anti-Semitism that is at the heart of Christianity. Christian figures who quote the Old Testament prophets and their criticisms of the children of Israel thereby prove that they, the Christians, are anti-Semites. Feldman has Christians coming and going. Those who deny that Jews worship the same God are manifestly anti-Semitic, while those who say we do worship the same God are engaged in the anti-Semitic ploy of coopting Judaism for Christian purposes. Similarly, for Christians to say that Judaism is the different "other" is anti-Semitic, and to deny that Judaism is significantly different is anti-Semitic. "In America today, the more common (though not solitary) form of anti-Semitic redefinition is denial of difference."

Coming back to the separation of church and state in America, Feldman cites Michel Foucault and Hans-Georg Gadamer on the connection between discourse and power, and complains that the "neutral" constitutional freedom given religious discourse inevitably results in "Christian domination." "In short," he writes, "so long as the country remains pervasively Christian, the Supreme Court's ability to change the structures (and eliminate the symbols) of the de facto establishment of Christianity is highly questionable (assuming that the Court actually wants to do so, which it does not)." The Court, the author says, is in a long tradition of the American refusal to eliminate Christian cultural influence. "As Madison himself revealed, the opponents of official establishments did not intend to reduce the Christian hold on America. To the contrary, Madison and others believed that Protestantism would spread most effectively without official establishment, through the congregations of the faithful." Americans have typically said that the separation of church and state in America has been good both for the state and for religion. That, according to Feldman, is precisely the problem: It has been good for Christianity.

What others call representative democracy by "we, the people" Feldman calls the oppressive tyranny of the anti-Semitic "mob" that is the "Christian masses." While Feldman says he is not sure the situation would be better without the separation of church and state, he deplores the fact that there is no serious consideration of interpreting the Constitution explicitly against the Christian

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domination. For example, the Court has ruled that clergy cannot give invocations at public school graduation ceremonies, but he complains that the Justices did not consider that it should be permissible for Jewish clergy to do so "because a rabbi delivers graduation prayers *in the face* of Christian domination" (emphasis in original).

Persecution Unbounded

Stephen Feldman is in-your-face all the way. Yet the book ends on a weak, almost whimpering, note about what it means to live within "the sticky web of Christian cultural and social power." He gives examples of the oppressions experienced by those "ensnared in the web of Christian domination." For instance, a Christian friend "said she had never before met a Jew, although she had seen two television characters who (she thought) were supposed to be Jewish." Mr. Feldman is deeply offended. But such a statement is hardly surprising in Oklahoma, since Jews are only 2 percent of the American population and are heavily concentrated in the urban North and the two coasts. For another instance, "The major intersection near my home had a temporary Christmas tree store with large signs advertising 'Merry Christmas, Christmas Trees.'" And yet another instance: "On September 1, 1995, I received an advertisement in the mail from an exclusive shopping center in Tulsa: 'Dear Christmas shopper: Every year you're faced with the same question: what to buy your employees for Christmas.'" The persecution of Mr. Feldman knows no bounds.

After almost three hundred pages of a wild postmodernist ride through Western history and a radically revisionist deconstruction of American constitutional theory, what remedy does the author propose? The book concludes with this: "I ask for one small political act. I request each reader to consider making a simple and direct statement questioning Christian imperialism. My idea: next year, when someone wishes you a 'Merry Christmas,' just say, 'Please don't! Don't wish me a Merry Christmas.'" In other words, the answer to the Christian cultural hegemony is for Christians to stop being Christian. It is an answer that is not likely to be well received in Oklahoma or anywhere else in the United States, which will, one fears, only confirm Mr. Feldman in his sense of being oppressed.

Bizarre and Important

Please Don't Wish Me a Merry Christmas, despite its hundred pages of notes, is innocent of any engagement with biblical and historical scholarship that offers more credible accounts of the complicated relationship between Christianity and Judaism, and is dogmatically indifferent to the vast literature on the Jewish-Christian dialogue of recent decades. Feldman seems to be entirely unfamiliar with the tradition of Franz Rosenzweig, the historic development of Christian thought about Judaism coming out of the Second Vatican Council, or such contemporary works as David Novak's *Jewish-Christian Dialogue.* For a dramatically different treatment of the contemporary questions addressed by Feldman, one thinks of—to cite but one instance—Elliott Abrams' new book, *Faith or Fear: How Jews Can Survive in a Christian America* (Free Press). And the recently published *Religion and State in the American Jewish Experience* (University of Notre Dame Press) edited by Jonathan Sarna and David Dalin offers a treatment of the constitutional and social issues that is both much more believable and much more constructive than Feldman's angry tirade (see review by Elliott Abrams in FT, October 1997). These and innumerable other Jewish writers are as emphatic as Feldman in beginning from the premise, "I am Jewish." Unlike Feldman, however, they do not believe that premise requires that others stop being, in the jargon of our postmodernist friends, "other."

As I say, Feldman's is an atypically explicit expression of a viewpoint that has great influence in academic and legal discussions about religion and public life. There are all too many who share with Feldman a belief that Christianity is inherently anti-Semitic and that religion in public—especially Christianity in public—is necessarily a threat to others. It is a viewpoint we should try to understand. Christians who think that religion has been marginalized and that we live in a post-Christian culture may be surprised by Feldman's repeated assertions about "the pervasive power of Christianity pulsing through the social body." For those who view the world as he does, every "Jesus Saves" bumper sticker is, as he claims, a slap at Jews and Judaism. He insists that in public schools every last vestige of religious influence must be eliminated lest his Jewish daughter suffer "a loss of self-esteem." This may strike readers as odd, since her father manifests a prodigiously healthy self-esteem that is directly related to his defiant "I am Jewish!" in the face of what he takes to be Christian cultural imperialism.

Feldman knows that Jews have been in the forefront of pressing for a "strict separationism" between church and state, and he is distressed about that. He thinks they have been "seduced" into settling for a separation of church and state when the real imperative is to separate religion from public life. Religion free from government interference, he complains, is simply freed for the exercise of social and cultural hegemony. Because the "Christian masses" are free to set the cultural pace, they have "effectively *forced* American Jews to Christianize to some extent" (emphasis in original). A minority has

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to define itself in relation to the majority, and that injustice can only be remedied by depriving the majority of its influence.

In his telling of history, Feldman acknowledges that Christians have at times been tolerant of Jews, but he complains that they do this out of "respect for Christian, not Judaic, tenets." This is the most galling thing, that Christians should have *Christian* reasons for being favorably disposed toward Jews. Thus is the Christian hegemony completed: Whether they oppress Jews or embrace Jews, it is always *they*, the Christians, who are calling the tune. Thus are Jews deprived even of the ownership of their own oppression. Feldman's argument is inaccurate, convoluted, bizarre, and profoundly insulting to Christians, but it is not unimportant.

Christians should read *Please Don't Wish Me a Merry Christmas*. It provides a window into a way of viewing the world and the American circumstance that needs to be understood. I believe it is a minority viewpoint, also among American Jews, but it is a viewpoint that needs to be engaged and countered by Jews and Christians alike if we are to sustain in America an historically unprecedented relationship of mutual respect and unquestioned security, despite differences that will not be resolved until they are indisputably clarified in the Kingdom of God. One says that in full awareness that Stephen Feldman and those of like mind will protest that way of putting it as an instance of what might be called preemptive hegemony, since Christians cannot deny that they think they know how the story will turn out. On the other hand, believing Jews think they know, too. What we know together is that God—the Father of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus—knows. That is enough. It is also the most secure basis of our living and working together in a world short of the final consummation.

FT

PRIME TIME RELIGION

Back in the fifties, *bien-pensant* Catholics who had been touched by cultural aspiration were embarrassed that Fulton J. Sheen was, more than anyone else, the public face of Catholicism in America. Many of his clerical brethren criticized him for pandering to a general audience and not using his immense popularity to communicate the meat and potatoes of the faith. This came to mind in reading Andrew Delbanco's review of Billy Graham's autobiography, *Just As I Am*. Writing in *The New Republic*, Delbanco speaks of Graham's mastery of television: "Other pioneers of TV religion—such as Fulton J. Sheen, whose one-man format of religious instruction was almost professorial, or Oral Roberts, whose hokey revival meetings featuring miracle cures failed to make it onto prime time in the big markets—never quite mastered the medium."

Leaving Oral Roberts out of it, the fact is that Bishop Sheen was the biggest show on network prime time and was the most popular show in America, putting into second place the putative king of television, Milton Berle. It does not detract from Billy Graham's immense achievements to note that his crusades have over the decades been on bought time, mainly on independent stations. Between Sheen and Graham there is simply no contest about who "mastered the medium." It is important to get the history straight when thinking about the place of religion in the big time media.

Ten years ago I wrote a book called *The Catholic Moment*. Pat Buchanan had a book out around the same time, *Right From the Beginning*, all about growing up Catholic in Georgetown. He sent me a copy inscribed with this: "There *was* a Catholic Moment three decades ago, for some of us. Thought you might enjoy reading about it." I did. He meant the era of Bing Crosby priests in movies such as *The Bells of St. Mary's* and, of course, of Bishop Sheen. It's a long and steep slide from Bishop Sheen to ABC's *Nothing Sacred*.

Today the insurgency of religion in public that catches the media's attention is mainly under evangelical Protestant auspices. Promise Keepers and the many manifestations of "the religious right" are generally treated as both hokey and threatening, certainly not part of the cultural mainstream. One may well wonder whether we were better off, in terms of the public face of Christianity, when the dominant figures were Bishop Sheen and the Protestant master of positive thinking, Norman Vincent Peale. (Adlai Stevenson, in one of the many asides that failed to endear him to the American people: "I find Paul appealing and Peale appalling.") Sheen's radio program, *The Catholic Hour*, ran from 1930 to 1952, and the television show, *Life Is Worth Living*, with some thirty million viewers, went from 1951 to 1957.

Peale, Sheen, and the catholic moment remembered by Buchanan were all part of a wondrous synthesis of religion and The American Way of Life represented by the Eisenhower era. (Rabbi Joshua Liebman filled out the interreligious troika.) Ike is often quoted as saying that America is built on religious faith, and he didn't care what faith it was. Numerous scholars have tried in vain to track down the quote but never mind, it reflected the spirit of the time. A prominent conservative leader once told me that his conservatism could be very simply defined: "Back to the Eisenhower era!" Peale was passé in the 1960s, but still presided over a very considerable publishing empire until his death as a

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very old man. Sheen had a short and stormy time (1966-69) as bishop of Rochester, New York, and spent his last ten years as a somewhat reclusive hero of Catholics who shared his critical attitude toward so much that went awry in the aftermath of Vatican Council II.

Billy Graham endured. From the beginning, hard-core fundamentalists railed against what they viewed as his doctrinal trimming and ecumenical compromises, accusing him of presenting an anodyne gospel in order to broaden his appeal. Although for decades he has ranked as the first or second most popular figure in America, the prestige media have consistently treated Graham as the respectable, or at least more respectable, representative of a distinctly unrespectable religious subculture. He never attained the cultural acceptability of Bishop Sheen in his prime, but that probably has less to do with the differences between the two men than with the crash of America's prime time in the cultural revolutions launched more than thirty years ago and continuing to this day.

FT

THIS IS NOT JUST ANY OLD DEMOCRACY

"If the people want abortion, the state should permit abortion, in a democracy." Thus Justice Antonin Scalia in response to a question following his lecture at the Gregorian University in Rome in May 1996. He hasn't heard the end of it. I believe Scalia has been getting a bum rap in some forums. The unguarded statement was made in a Q & A session, and it is clear that Scalia had reference to the need for judges to refrain from pitting their own moral judgments against the judgments of the people as expressed through their representatives.

Father Robert A. Connor addresses the Scalia brouhaha in a thoughtful article in the *American Journal of Jurisprudence*. It is a complex argument and I will not attempt to summarize it, except to say that Fr. Connor contends that the truth of natural law in jurisprudence is a "second tier" derivative from the religious faith of Americans at the time of the founding, and what Americans actually believed at the time should be taken seriously by anyone who subscribes to an "originalist" understanding of the Constitution. Justice Scalia may be right about *a* democracy, he says, but not about *this* democracy.

Along the way of his argument, Fr. Connor tosses in some facts and observations that you may find handy when across the kitchen table someone says that the Founders intended a secular constitutional order. "This absoluteness, appearing as consensus and self-evidence, coincided historically with an almost total presence of Christian faith as praxis in the colonies. Benjamin Hart asserts that 'America at the end of the eighteenth century was overwhelmingly Protestant, and of the dissident variety. Though precise figures on church membership are not available, we do have numbers on church bodies. In 1775 there were 668 Congregational churches; 588 Presbyterian; 494 Baptist; 310 Quaker; 159 German Reformed; 150 Lutheran; 65 Methodist; 31 Moravian; 27 Congregational-Separatist; 24 Dunker; and 16 Mennonite churches. The Anglican Church had 495 congregations, making it a decided minority in America at the time of the revolution. About 75 percent of all Americans belonged to churches of Puritan extraction. When dissenting Protestants and Anglicans are combined, we find a religious composition in America that was 98.4 percent Protestant, 1.4 percent Roman Catholic, and three-twentieths of one percent Jewish.' Besides the numerical presence of believing Christians, [Walter] Berns reports that '[t]o one degree or another, and in one or another of its Christian varieties, over half the states had an established religion. . . .' Concerning the impact of this on the societal ethos, Washington remarked in his farewell address: 'Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. . . . [R]eason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.' Jefferson himself (enemy of 'monkish ignorance and superstition') questioned whether 'the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God.' Tocqueville, in summing up his observations on the country, remarked: 'I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion—for who can search the human heart?—but I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society.'"

From the peanut gallery: So what does all that prove? I don't know that it "proves" much of anything, but it does strongly suggest that when the Founders spoke of the *truths* that make freedom necessary they didn't mean—à la the notorious "mystery passage" in the *Casey* decision—the truths sundry individuals concocted in the shower this morning, or wherever people do their concocting. In *this* democracy, truths have a determinate history.

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Someone might respond, "At least they used to." But that's not quite right. If *these* truths did, they still do. That's the way it is with truths, and that, too, is what is meant by an originalist reading of the Constitution.

FT

SENSITIVITY FOR THE OPPRESSORS

In a defiant defense of the Chinese Communist dictatorship, the *Christian Century* features major articles attacking the movement to protest religious persecution in that country. Based on work in China with Mennonite groups, one article solidly sides with the National Council of Churches (NCC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC), both of which are close to the government-sponsored religious organizations in China. The authors write, "The NCC urges attentiveness to the voices of Chinese Christians and takes its cues from the China Christian Council (CCC), China's only nationally recognized Protestant organization." Another article, written by a Presbyterian pastor who teaches conflict resolution in Cape Town, South Africa, seconds the argument that religious persecution in China is being greatly exaggerated, and the best way to help Chinese Christians is through "constructive dialogue" with the regime.

While it is admitted that the CCC is subservient to the government, we are urged to understand Chinese sensibilities about foreign interference. For instance, "Mainland Chinese have great pride and sensitivity to territorial questions, especially those about autonomy for Taiwan and Tibet." About China's cruel conquest of Tibet and its threat to take over Taiwan, if necessary by force, the Chinese are proud and sensitive, and we should be sensitive to that. The *Century* criticizes the U.S. State Department report on religious persecution in China. "The anti-China publicity that the report generated confirmed the Chinese fear that Americans are anti-Chinese." In fact, the report was generated by publicity about religious persecution, a subject on which the State Department had been shamefully reticent in the past.

Remarkable for a magazine that describes itself as "An Ecumenical Weekly," there is not one mention of Roman Catholicism in China. On the eve of a state visit by a head of state who is aptly called "the butcher of Tianenmen Square," the *Century* maintained its long tradition of soft-pedalling criticism of Communist regimes. During the Cold War, the agencies of liberal Protestantism repeatedly urged understanding of the difficulties faced by Communist rulers and claimed that questions of persecution are best addressed through "quiet diplomacy." This in dramatic contrast to their strident interventionism in South Africa, and equally strident support for leftist insurgencies in, for example, Central America. The argument advanced by the *Century* that American protest against religious persecution makes life more difficult for Chinese Christians should be recognized for what it is: an argument against human rights as an integral part of U.S. foreign policy, and an argument against Christians speaking out on behalf of persecuted brothers and sisters.

The position advanced by the *Century*, NCC, WCC, and others has a respectable place in the tradition of a Realpolitik approach to politics among nations. It would be more credible, however, were these organizations not so blatantly selective in their application of "principled protest" and "constructive dialogue." Added to the ideological propensities of these organizations is the factor that the protest against religious persecution in China is being pressed primarily by evangelical Protestants. If evangelicals are for the protest, oldline liberals must be against it. In addition to the repugnance of serving as apologists for a brutal dictatorship, this promotion of divisiveness among Christians in America is hard to square with the stated mission of "an ecumenical weekly." Did I mention that the *Century*'s special China issue had not one word on the millions of Catholics in China?

FT

TRUTH PERFORMED AND DEFORMED

The children of the famous have a mixed blessing, especially if they try to make their mark in the same field as their famous parent. They can travel so far on the famous name, but then feel the need to do something dramatically different in order to assert that they are persons in their own right. Such would seem to be the dynamics driving the career of Susannah Heschel, daughter of one of the most distinguished Jewish thinkers of this century, the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. She has undeniably succeeded in making sure that nobody will confuse her work with that of her father. In a new book, *Judaism Since Gender* (Routledge), Heschel, a professor of Jewish Studies at Case Western University, has an essay titled, "Jesus as Theological Transvestite." She observes that some

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Jewish scholars, in an effort to upgrade Judaism in the eyes of Christians, have claimed Jesus as an entirely Jewish figure, while many Christian scholars have resisted that claim.

In what is, sad to say, not intended as a parody of current academic fashions, she writes: "In considering the inscription of Jesus at the boundaries, I would suggest turning from a binary view of Judaism and Christianity to a more usefully complicated picture of religious development that recognizes the performative nature of religious activity. The interpretive language that makes this move possible comes from recent work in queer theory, which offers a corrective to some earlier feminist approaches. In particular, queer theory addresses the problem of binary thinking, in which male and female function as static terms of reference in dichotomous relation to one another. Instead this theory suggests that the binary construct of male and female is fictive, calling our attention to categories of overlap and confusion of sexual identity, in which male and female become so intricately intertwined that no effective separation of their components appears possible. The emergence of queer theory stems from theoretical innovations that see gender not as an identifiable essence, as in the modernist tradition, nor even a social construction, as in the postmodernist tradition, but as a performance without any fixed referential point. Judith Butler writes that 'there is no gender identity behind expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results.'"

The contribution of feminist scholarship, says Prof. Heschel, is to destabilize everything. In the old scheme of things, "Jews dressed Jesus as a rabbi" and Christians "insisted upon the opposition between Jesus and Judaism." "By contrast, Jesus as theological transvestite unsettles and 'queers' our understanding of the 'boundaries' between Judaism and Christianity." As indeed it queers the boundaries between reality and any truth we might choose to perform "without any fixed referential point." Of course, the post-post-modernist flimflammers who hold sway over so much of the academy would insist that "reality" and "truth" be ironically caged in quotation marks. As for the great Heschel, many of us who knew and loved him expect that he would be shaking his head in sad disbelief.

FT

The Soul of Liberalism

"Contending for the soul of liberalism." That, I said in "The Liberalism of John Paul II" (FT, May 1997), is what we must be up to. There came in response the usual objections from the enemies of liberalism, both left and right. Don't I know that the liberal regime is more than a political system? It is also a moral-cultural order that systematically destroys the bonds of tradition, community, and virtue. Yes, I know very well the arguments to that effect, and they are partially persuasive. But we live within the tradition and constitutional order of liberalism, and it is here that we must do the best we can. It is both too easy and counterproductive to blame liberalism for the moral shambles of our social circumstance. We ought not let the debilitated liberalism of more recent history control the definition of the liberal tradition itself.

Peter Berkowitz, professor of government at Harvard (though recently denied tenure) and occasional FT contributor, agrees, and sends along his excellent essay published in the Fall 1996 issue of *Perspectives on Political Science*, "Liberalism's Virtue." Berkowitz examines the teachings of the founding fathers of the liberal tradition—Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill—and rescues them from their captivity to both critics and admirers who claim that it is the chief virtue of liberalism that it has dispensed with the need for virtue.

Berkowitz makes a lucid and convincing argument of many parts, including some interesting thoughts on why Mill was so opposed to the idea that government should be in the business of educating the citizenry.

Berkowitz writes: "If one rejects the simple equation of virtue with human perfection and understands virtue also as those qualities of mind and character that support the attainment of a range of ends and the performance of a variety of tasks, then such makers of modern liberalism as Hobbes, Locke, Kant, and Mill come into view as assigning an essential place to virtue in moral and political life. Their differences of opinion about virtue, as well as underlying continuities, can be brought out by examining in the case of each thinker the specific catalogue of virtues put forward, the end or ends virtue is asked to serve, and the means proposed for fostering virtue. . . . I do not wish to deny that the very idea of virtue in the liberal tradition is marked by basic and destabilizing tensions. What I do wish to affirm, though, is that the liberal tradition provides an illuminating and underappreciated source of instruction about the necessity of virtue where the natural freedom and equality of all is a principle on which the legitimacy of government is thought to rest."

Berkowitz recognizes that the liberal tradition has built-in tensions if not contradictions. "For example, in contrast to those who oppose contemporary liberalism and its concern for individual rights and

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fair procedures, a civic republicanism devoted to the goods of democratic participation and the energetic practice of civic virtue, the liberal tradition teaches how to affirm the importance of virtue and the associational life to which it is intimately connected without losing sight of the good reasons for protecting individuals against the authority of community and protecting communities as well as individuals, when necessary, against overbearing state power. In contrast to those who analyze the weaknesses of American democracy in terms of disappearing stocks of social capital and a declining civil society, the liberal tradition reminds us that social capital depends on moral capital—that is, on energetic and self-reliant individuals capable of forming and maintaining the voluntary associations that sustain the habits of cooperation and self-restraint that are so useful to liberal democracies. In short, in contrast to today's democratic theorists who typically see only the need to restore some single element of democracy in the United States, the makers of modern liberalism teach the permanent necessity—at least for states based on the freedom and equality of all—of weaving together moral and political principles that must be made to support one another although they often pull in opposing directions."

Contemporary liberalism, which reduces all to individualistic self-expression and moral license, must be countered by another liberalism that can draw on the founding sources of the liberal tradition itself. An intellectually persuasive and socially effective countering, of course, must draw also on the religious sources that, however unrecognized, give coherence to the tradition's treatment of virtue and human flourishing. Countering the currently prevalent notions of liberalism is today typically called conservatism. The better way to understand it is that we are contending for the soul of liberalism.

FT

A WOMAN'S CHOICE

My colleague J. Bottum, who recently left us for the Weekly Standard, *mentioned this rather different movie on the subject of choice, so I asked him to write up the following note. You might want to keep it in mind the next time you visit the video store.*

Jorge Luis Borges has a story—one of his typically mocking, philosophically pointed tales—about a twentieth-century man who has spent his life painfully rewriting an exact replica of *Don Quixote*. How different look the little passages of Spanish prose the man has managed to produce, the narrator points out, when we know that they're written not by Cervantes but by someone alive now. Borges' story came to mind recently while thinking about movies, about how differently viewers would take Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert in Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night*—essentially a film about the lengths to which two beautiful and highly aroused people will go to avoid having premarital sex—were it released today instead of 1934, when it took all the top Oscars.

The occasion for this reflection was watching a relatively new film from Columbia Pictures called *Fools Rush In*, now out on videocassette. Starring the amiably goofy Matthew Perry as a New York troubleshooter sent out to Nevada and the gorgeous Salma Hayek as the feisty Hispanic photographer with whom he falls in love, the movie is hardly great art—just a straightforward and perfectly enjoyable romantic comedy of the kind that Hollywood turned out at the rate of two a month back in the 1930s and '40s.

But how different it seems now. Directed by Andy Tennant from a screenplay by Katherine Reback, *Fools Rush In* tells the story of Alex Whitman, a stereotypically ironic Manhattanite posted for a few months in Las Vegas, and Isabelle Fuentes, a Mexican-American working as a camera girl at Caesar's Palace. They "meet cute," as the expression goes, in line to use the toilet in a restaurant (a scene that probably wouldn't have made it into *It Happened One Night*), and they both get a little drunk. Awakening at five the next morning in Alex's bed, Isabelle flees in disgust at her one-night stand—only to show up three months later to announce to Alex her resulting pregnancy.

From there the movie develops pretty much the way you'd expect, or at least pretty much the way you'd expect if this were 1934: he proposes, she refuses; she runs, he follows; they marry that same day and spend the next six months in shock at their sudden marriage, their expected child, and the fact that he lives in New York and she in Nevada. Oh, and it all turns out happy.

A successful screenwriter once described to me how easy he had found it to set pro-life themes in the movies on which he's worked—always provided, of course, that the characters never talk about it. Sympathetic figures are not allowed to use pro-life rhetoric, and whenever the topic of abortion comes up, they have to mouth the accepted Hollywood cant of choice. But otherwise no one seems to notice if you put happy mothers and wanted children in your stories. It's not so much a matter of sneaking the truth past the censors as letting the truth stand out unspoken.

Whether or not the director and the screenwriter intended it, *Fools Rush In* is astonishingly anti-abortion for a modern film. Completely absent are the slogans of the pro-life movement, but present is

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the truth about how most people actually think when they're not talking abstractly about abortion. Alex falls back in love with his wife when he hears the infant's heartbeat, while Isabelle's obstetrician casually asks if they want an ultrasound printout as "the first picture of your baby." A lightning-fast but telling scene occurs when Isabelle first tells Alex she's pregnant and knows what she has to do. "Oh, thank God," he cries before he catches himself and sententiously adds, "I mean, I have always believed in a woman's right to choose." "Good," Isabelle answers, "because I choose to keep this baby."

As I said, if this were 1934, you probably wouldn't notice, just sit back and enjoy the light film. But things have changed since then, and it seems worthwhile to mention a new movie that has the novelty of old-fashionedness.

FT

BEARING THE CROSS

"The Catholicizing of the Holocaust." That is one rabbi's way of putting the Jewish complaint against the canonizing of Edith Stein. One obvious response is that Edith Stein "Catholized" Edith Stein, and therefore her part in the Holocaust. One commentator has observed that she was killed as a Jew but died as a Christian. But that doesn't seem quite right. A more compelling response is offered by Dominican Father J. Augustine DiNoia at a recent Mass commemorating Edith Stein.

> In her essay, "The Road to Carmel," Edith Stein wrote: "I spoke to our Savior and told him that I knew it was His Cross which was now being laid on the Jewish people. Most of them did not understand it; but those who did understand must accept it willingly in the name of all."
>
> These words hint at the deeply mysterious way in which Edith Stein vicariously identified herself with her people. It is a matter that she always understood to be of great significance for the meaning of her life—a conviction that her mother had inspired in her—that her birthday was October 21, 1891, the feast of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, that year. Indeed, forty-two years later, with her entrance into Carmel, she identified herself with Queen Esther (see Esther 8:3-6):
>
> "I am confident that the Lord has taken my life for all the Jews. I always have to think of Queen Esther, who was taken away from her people for the express purpose of standing before the king for her people. I am the very poor, weak, and small Esther, but the king who selected me is very great and merciful."
>
> She could not have known then how prophetic these words would turn out to be.

Fr. DiNoia continues:

> The events of the last month of her life show clearly why this great saint is to be venerated in the Church as a martyr. There is a fact that is little known and of great significance for understanding the nature of her martyrdom. On July 26, 1942, the Dutch bishops protested the deportation of Jews in a pastoral letter read in all the Catholic churches of Holland. The Nazi officials retaliated by arresting all Catholics, but not other Christians, of Jewish origins. They came for Edith and her sister Rosa on August 2. After passing through several other camps, they finally arrived at Auschwitz on August 9, and they died in the gas chamber there on that very day. Thus it happened, in God's mysterious design, that Edith Stein—Blessed Teresa Benedicta of the Cross—went to her death, as a Jew, embracing solidarity with her people, and, as a Christian, bearing witness unto death to the Catholic protest against the evil of anti-Semitism.
>
> Only in the "science of the Cross" could such a death have the meaning of a victory. We learn this science from Christ himself who, in a definitive way, conquered the evil of sin and death through the Cross, and who leads each one of us, one by one, through the same passage—*passio*—so that sin will die in us and give way to the newness of life.
>
> In declaring Edith Stein a saint and martyr, the Church expresses her faith that, in the end, it was God himself who blessed and enabled Edith Stein's willing embrace of the Cross and her vicarious representation of her people and, by this sign, confirmed our faith in Christ's victory over evil, even in the organized and seemingly superhuman form it assumed in Nazi anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ In a recent lecture in Rome a while back, I defended, among other things, the proposition that "tolerance is a Christian virtue." In response, I am sent Dorothy Sayers' essay, "The Other Six Deadly

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Sins," just republished by Sophia Institute Press in a collection titled *Creed or Chaos?* Sayers writes, "The Church names the sixth deadly Sin *Acedia* or Sloth. In the world it calls itself Tolerance; but in Hell it is called Despair." She goes on: "It is the accomplice of the other sins and their worst punishment. It is the sin which believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, loves nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and only remains alive because there is nothing it would die for." It is so nicely said that one hesitates to disagree. There is tolerance, and then there is tolerance. There is the tolerance of indifference to truth, and then there is the tolerance (from *tolerare*—to endure) that is the fortitude to bear with people, also with people who do their worst to make themselves unbearable. The latter is indeed a virtue.

■ Britain's New Labor government has a few tried and failed ideas of its own. Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, brings to my attention that Her Majesty's Government promoted a first-ever Sexual Awareness Week. An official explained, "Young people are less likely to have early sex if there is good communication about the subject at home. We are emphasizing that sex is fun and talking is the key to a healthy sex life." Right. "It's really fun, kids, so don't do it." I can't help thinking that it's a sad commentary on the younger generation when they have to be instructed to take an interest in sex. What's really interesting, however, is the assertion that talking is the key to the thing. "Brits do it verbally." It's downright kinky.

■ Joseph Vining, professor of law at the University of Michigan, is commenting on Jefferson Powell's *The Moral Tradition of American Constitutionalism*, which has received some attention in these pages. At a symposium at Notre Dame Law School, Vining said: "If, beyond constitutional theories, the central texts of constitutional law themselves contain assertions that there is no capacity in us to read or write authoritative texts, then there is no capacity in us to read or treat as authoritative the texts that assert there is no such capacity—they certainly can make no claim to authority: they have burnt the bridge to themselves as they have burnt the bridge to authority, and left us as if they were not there. And the question then becomes, what else is there if they are not there? Only legal method gives an enshrining of atomistic individualism in Supreme Court opinions any force. Quite aside from the fact that the enshrining is in one opinion and not another, in some or many but not all, in those of one era but not all eras, in majority opinions, concurring opinions, plurality opinions, it is legal method that leads us to look at them at all, pay attention to them, pay close enough attention even to begin drawing out their 'rationalism' from the tumble of words in them. To the extent that what they say makes legal method foolish or impossible, they lose their force, inevitably, regardless, without our doing. And one might think they are not to be feared—no more feared than the figure of a man in the corner of a busy room who says, apparently believing it, that he is not there and does not exist. If he denies as well your own capacity to see, and he himself clearly has no stick or gun and is physically harmless, he would necessarily lose out in the competing claims upon your attention." That is a tightly-packed statement. I take it to mean this: When, as in the notorious "mystery passage" in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the Supreme Court denies any normative moral tradition and suggests that liberty means that truth is whatever an individual chooses to say is true, the Court is declaring that it is not authorized to tell us that truth is whatever an individual chooses to say is true. Unlike the man who says he does not exist, however, the Court is not harmless. Unless, of course, we take it at its word and deprive it of its gun and stick.

■ We don't do it with the english, the irish, the spanish, or americans, so why do we print "blacks" in lower case. That is a good question from Frank Jennings of San Antonio, Texas. It does seem an anomaly. But we generally follow the style manuals, and they say "blacks." One reason they do, I suppose, is that one should ordinarily refer to people in the way they want to be referred to, and it seems most blacks prefer "blacks." A much earlier "colored people" was not capitalized, nor is today's "people of color." Negro is capitalized, as is African-American, but despite Mr. Jesse Jackson's pronunciamento of some years ago that the latter is the correct appellation, it does not seem to have caught on with most Americans of African descent, at least not outside the academy. Quite frankly, my life is so driven by principles that I welcome a problem where no great principle is involved and we are permitted to go with the flow.

■ We refused an ad for the book, so why give it free publicity by mentioning it? Because it says something not entirely uninteresting about our intellectual culture. The book is *The Life and Death of NSSM 200* by Stephen D. Mumford, and it traces the fate of a national security memo, reportedly supported by Presidents Nixon and Ford, that proposed an all-out attack on the alleged crisis of a domestic and global population explosion. The book itself is an all-out attack on those who resist such an attack, and especially on the Vatican for its wicked manipulations in controlling the policies of the U.S. and the United Nations. Among the chapters are "The Cross of Papal Infallibility," "Postponing Self-Destruction of the Church," and "Defection of the Faithful." Such frenzied anti-

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Catholic conspiracy-mongering is hardly new, but one is impressed by the eminences who warmly endorse the book: the former head of the Sierra Club, Gene La Rocque of the Center for Defense Information, Edward O. Wilson of Harvard, and Father Hans Küng, German theologian. From the ad: "A fascinating and disturbing insight into a population policy that could have changed the world but for the machinations of the Vatican." That claim is the kind of thing that could give machination a good name.

■ Ask Dr. Bernard Nathanson a question and you get an answer. So I asked about "Ethical Considerations of Assisted Reproductive Technologies," recently issued by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. Being a man of definite views, Dr. Nathanson says of this "odious document" that it speaks of "abandoned embryos" as though they were property to be claimed at the lost-and-found department of the New York subway system. It comments glowingly on the prospects of embryo splitting, "which to all intents and purposes is human cloning." There is also enthusiasm for the possibility of impregnating postmenopausal women with no age limit at all, leading Dr. Nathanson to envision "PTA meetings held in the nearest nursing home." Nor does the report overlook the benefits of reproducing yourself after you are dead. "To its credit," Nathanson observes, "the committee does express concern over the use of fetal ovaries/oocytes to be used in the laboratory manufacture of human beings. What, after all, is the child to say about his or her mother, the aborted fetus?" Some readers may be offended by the gallows humor, but it is only in order to deny grief a monopoly.

■ Crowd two thousand people into a compound smaller than a city block, where space per person is measured in inches, food is scarce, and life is uncertain under the guns of enemy forces, and you will discover a lot about human nature. That is the story of Langdon Gilkey's *Shantung Compound: The Story of Men and Women Under Pressure*, first published in 1966 and now excerpted in a reprint from the Trinity Forum. The reprint carries a foreword by Os Guinness of the Forum, who was also born in China and had first-hand experience of what happened when the Japanese invaded and rounded up the Western businessmen, diplomats, and missionaries with whom Gilkey was imprisoned. For Gilkey, who went on to a long career teaching theology at the University of Chicago, the chief lesson of Shantung Compound was the shattering of his smug, liberal, bourgeois confidence about the innate goodness and rationality of human beings. Those years turned Gilkey into a Niebuhrian, meaning a believer in Reinhold Niebuhr's stark moral "realism." Like most educated people of his kind, Gilkey had been taught to think that, if people were rationally persuaded of the moral rightness of a thing, they would act upon that knowledge. "I now understood that beneath this surface harmony lay the reality I had just discovered. But only the ruthless competition in the offices of the business world, the bitter economic and political clashes of our wider community life—where the fundamental conflicts of career, race, class, or nation are waged—manifest to those of us who live in comfort the ugly specters of human hostility, self-interest, and prejudice. The ordinary social relations fostered in college or country club seemed continually to validate the modern liberal estimate of man as rational and moral, able to see what is right and willing to pursue it for the common good." In circumstances such as the compound "no one feigns virtue any longer, and few aspire to it, for it hurts rather than pays to be good. Consequently, here virtue—as the wise men have always insisted—is rare indeed. . . . It was a rare person indeed in our camp whose mind could rise beyond that involvement of the self in crucial issues to view them dispassionately. Rational behavior in communal action is primarily a moral and not an intellectual achievement, possible only to a person who is morally capable of self-sacrifice. In a real sense, I came to believe, moral selflessness is a *prerequisite* for the life of reason—not its consequence, as so many philosophers contend." *Shantung Compound* is compelling reading, even if one would want to balance it with, for instance, Samuel and Pearl Oliner's *The Altruistic Personality*, the story of those who rescued Jews from the Nazis under circumstances of extreme peril. Among Niebuhr's great achievements was to devastate the sentimental liberalism that ignores the pervasiveness of sin and tragedy in the human experience. Among Niebuhr's weaknesses—or the weaknesses of many Niebuhrians—is the failure to appreciate the human capacity for moral grandeur, as exemplified in the lives of saints and martyrs and so powerfully explicated in, for instance, John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of Truth). For a free copy of the reprint from *Shantung Compound*, write Trinity Forum, 5210 Lyngate Court, Suite B, Burke, Virginia 11015.

■ Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard Law School has frequently warned of the ways in which the international human rights "community" tries to establish new rights through international law, thus doing an end-run around domestic politics that might not favor such rights. David M. Smolin of Cumberland Law School takes up this concern in a major article, "Will International Human Rights Be Used as a Tool of Cultural Genocide? The Interaction of Human Rights Norms, Religion, Culture, and Gender" (*Journal of Law and Religion*). His conclusion: "The reform of human rights law, if it were to be attempted, would involve

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severely reducing the scope of its aspirations. For example, it would certainly not be a small thing if international human rights law could be effective against genocide; international human rights law, it would seem, has dissipated its moral force and its efforts by offering itself to be used by virtually every cause that can be placed in the idiom of 'rights-talk.' Not every worthy cause or human good can or should be transformed into an international 'right.' Religion has had to learn, sometimes only through painful and destructive experience, that not all of its most cherished goods can or should be enforced by political means. The relatively young human rights movement needs to be taught the same lesson, hopefully before it seriously mars its reputation by destroying the very rights it was designed to protect. Until and unless a severe winnowing of the goals and norms of international human rights law occurs, religious believers, and people of good will who believe in intermediary institutions, religious freedom, and family rights, should be warned. For the great contemporary protector of rights, the international human rights movement, would, if given real power, constitute one of the gravest threats to those rights yet conceived by humanity."

■ Writing in the *Journal of Church and State*, Timothy A. Byrnes of Colgate University reviews *Catholicism, Liberalism, and Communitarianism: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition and the Moral Foundations of Democracy*. He likes the book, but thinks the various contributors to this collection of essays are too hard on the Democrats and too easy on the Republicans. His conclusion: "This may be, as Richard Neuhaus has claimed, a Catholic moment in American social and political life. Certainly, *Catholicism, Liberalism, and Communitarianism* makes the philosophical point that Catholicism has a great deal to say to modern day Americans. But no one should assume that the ideological or partisan implications of Catholic social teaching are straightforward or run in only one political direction. They do not. And that may be precisely why the Church's teachings come across in this provocative book as so unusually dynamic and vibrant." He may be right about the Republican tilt of the book, but it should be added that Catholic social teaching does not run in only two political directions. In fact, it runs toward a politics that is not likely to be embodied by any party any time soon. That said, we must choose between the choices on offer.

■ Ronald Dworkin's *Life's Dominion* continues to exercise considerable influence in legal thinking about abortion. Richard Stith of Valparaiso University tackles Dworkin's argument in the *Maryland Law Review* (Vol. 56, No. 2, 1997). The article is "On Death and Dworkin: A Critique of His Theory of Inviolability." Stith agrees with Dworkin on the legal and philosophical problems entailed in contending for the "right" of the unborn child, but effectively challenges Dworkin's notion of "inviolability" and its basis in an economic theory of "valuing." In its place, Stith proposes the idea of "respect," and argues in considerable detail that respect requires the protection of the unborn. It is an argument of many parts that will be of special interest to students of the jurisprudential twists and turns in the abortion debate.

■ In the tradition of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Feminists for Life agrees with Stanton's assertion: "When we consider that women are treated as property, it is degrading to women that we should treat our children as property to be disposed of as we see fit." The organization, now celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, is making an invaluable contribution to the pro-life cause. For information write 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005.

■ *Nicotine Theological Journal* is not just about smoking, although the editors do keep returning to the subject in order to tweak religious liberalism about one of its most adamantly held dogmas, the unmitigated evil of tobacco. *NTJ* is published by the Old Life Theological Society and is "dedicated to recovering the riches of confessional Presbyterianism." The current issue takes a skeptical view of the Southern Baptist boycott against Disney. They note a Jerry Falwell publication with the headline, "Walt Disney Would be Ashamed." So why, the editors wonder, are Christians obliged to honor the sacred memory of Disney? In addition, they note, Disney's involvement in so many enterprises has not overlooked the Christian market. Just south of the Magic Kingdom in Orlando, for instance, is a new Disney development called "Celebration." It's for people who want the morality of the 1950s combined with "all the neat gear you have today." "By subtly conflating 1950s-style wholesomeness with Christian virtue, it is luring white, middle-class, pro-family values citizens to *live* in a theme park. No longer is Disney content to get them for a week a year. It wants to buy their whole souls. (Oh yes, there will be churches in Celebration. The first to go up will be a Presbyterian (USA) Church. But when will the first Southern Baptist church be built? And what happens when from the pulpit its pastor urges a Disney boycott?)" The issue also includes some comment on the FT question about "the end of democracy," and seems to come down on the side of David Bovenizer, whose letter to FT suggested that democracy ended with Lincoln. Although the editors insist that their publication is not "a Reformed version of *Cigar Aficionado*," the issue does conclude by returning to a subject of more than incidental interest. J. Gresham Machen, that stalwart opponent of theological modernism, wrote

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to his mother during his last semester as an undergraduate at Princeton: "The fellows are in my room now on the last Sunday night, smoking the cigars and eating the oranges which it has been the greatest delight I ever had to provide whenever possible. My idea of delight is a Princeton room full of fellows smoking. When I think what a wonderful aid tobacco is to friendship and Christian patience I have sometimes regretted that I never began to smoke." *Nicotine Theological Journal* is not for everyone, but those who feel the craving and want short-term satisfaction at the risk of long-term edification can get more by writing 622 Orchid Lane, Altamonte Springs, Florida 32714. I assume Altamonte Springs is not a Disney enterprise.

■ A common confusion about the virtue of poverty is evident in the Joseph B. Brennan Lecture delivered by Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee at Georgetown University. He is reflecting on the tenth anniversary of the bishops' pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All,* and notes that since then "There has been a definite weakening of interest in liberation theology." It is an apparently regretful observation. One might note that interest in the liberation theology that received so much attention ten and more years ago has not simply weakened but has virtually disappeared. "Perhaps the error of the liberation theologians," the archbishop continues, "was to propose as a biblical ideal a Church of the poor when most people want to live at the same basic economic level as the rest of the developed world." That incisive observation is immediately followed by this: "Just as Americans vote by their pocketbook and not their religious convictions, so others seek most of all what they believe will raise their economic standards." The implication would seem to be that, if poor people voted their religious convictions, they would vote to remain economically disadvantaged. Perhaps the error of Archbishop Weakland, and many others, is to propose as a "biblical ideal" being economically disadvantaged. Voluntary poverty and simplicity of life for the sake of the Kingdom is indeed a biblical ideal. But to choose to be poor one must first have the option of being nonpoor. It is to be feared that Archbishop Weakland has not fully appreciated the teaching of John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus* and elsewhere that the goal of justice is the inclusion of the poor in "the circle of productivity and exchange." Freed from the fate of poverty, people are free to resist, by the grace of God, the temptations of consumerism and greed that undoubtedly accompany the market economy toward which the archbishop, like the liberation theologians of yesteryear, exhibits such an enduring animus.

■ Of interest in the great G. K. Chesterton there is no end, apparently. Certainly there is no end of the matters on which he wrote. So that should keep a handsome new magazine going for a long time. My only misgiving is about its name, *Gilbert!*, which sounds like his wife Frances announcing that the dinner is getting cold. In any event, for $25 you can join the American Chesterton Society and get ten issues per year. Write 4117 Pebblebrook Circle, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55437.

■ Our notice of Norman Davies' *Europe: A History* (FT, November 1997) was critically appreciative. It is in some respects a marvelous overview, but is carelessly put together, with many egregious errors in things so elementary as dates and names. (I understand that most are corrected in the second printing.) Davies has a refreshing, but finally exaggerated emphasis on the importance of East Central Europe, meaning mainly Poland. Tony Judt, professor of European studies at New York University, joins other reviewers, mainly American, who are much harsher in their judgment of the book. Writing in *The New Republic,* Judt suggests that Davies' apologia for Poland and Poles, and his too light treatment of Germany and Germans, is tinged with anti-Semitism, although he finally says that Davies is not anti-Semitic but "merely pro-Polish." Judt earlier wrote in the *New York Review of Books* a scathing attack on John Paul II, whom he does not like at all. In the course of discussing Davies and anti-Semitism, Judt observes, "Here, as elsewhere on such matters, Davies is distinctly more Catholic than the Pope." Judt's prejudices do tend to weaken his criticism of Davies for letting his prejudices lead to a tendentious writing of history.

■ Some years ago I was in this shop that specializes in clerical clothing and noticed a seedy-looking guy buying dozens of clerical shirts in every color available. It turns out he was getting ready to open the Limelight, a hard-porn night club around the corner, located in a church that had been sold by the Episcopalians. The bare-bottomed waiters were all dressed as priests. When the papers reported on the Limelight, then Episcopal bishop Paul Moore said he was shocked, simply shocked, that such a thing could happen in New York. The Limelight has since been closed for multiple infractions against drug laws and other crimes and misdemeanors. Take it from there, Second City. In May, the Convent nightclub opened on Armitage Street in Chicago, a traditional dance club but "themed" after the Catholic Church. The non-Catholic owners, sisters Suria and Shar Mansukhani, feature restrooms labeled Hymns and Hers, house drinks called "Holy Water" and "Confessionals," waitresses in typical Catholic schoolgirl outfits (plaid skirt, white blouse, knee-high stockings), and bartenders in priests' collars. The VIP rooms are Heaven (upstairs) and Hell (lower level). Said Surita, "We're certainly not intending to be sacrilegious in any way." Of course not. Just having a little fun.

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■ The outgoing president of the American Bar Association, N. Lee Cooper, is worried by all this talk about judicial usurpation. In his "President's Message" in the *ABA Journal* he decries "aggressive actions that threaten the independence of the federal judiciary." In his defense of activist judges, one gets the impression that independence means independence from the Constitution and the corresponding branches of government. He is most particularly outraged by any suggestion that judges should be subject to reappointment or any other check on their lifelong rule. Some in Congress, he complains, suggest term limits for judges even while "not placing term limits on themselves." I'm not sure that term limits for judges is a good idea, but it apparently escapes Mr. Cooper's attention that legislators do come up for reelection from time to time. And it is not unprecedented that some of them are replaced.

■ The registration fee is $1,395 and the setting is oceanfront luxury in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. It's the "Third International Conference on Spirituality in Business." Here's the pitch: "From the Chairman of the Board on down, more and more managers are practicing and encouraging compassion, authenticity, integrity, respect, and connection in day-to-day work. Why? Because those qualities provide a deep personal satisfaction as well as a distinct competitive advantage." The conference "is the ideal forum for exploring how our work life can support our religious life—and vice versa." Repress your anti-Babbittry impulses for a moment. Maybe such affairs really do help people, in the sense of making them feel better, behave more nicely toward others, and even increase their profits. Maybe, just maybe, behind the advertising come-on is a program of serious religious growth. But forgive me for doubting it. The reference to generic "spirituality" and generic "religion" is not encouraging. And the idea that you should grow spiritually for reasons of self-satisfaction and competitive advantage raises Mr. Eliot's caution about the greater treason of doing the right thing for the wrong reason. The reason corrupts the thing done. (You have now saved $1,395. It would be a big help in supporting the work of FIRST THINGS.)

■ Were you in charge of a country that is terrorized by drug-related crime, has a guerrilla movement that threatens to overthrow the government, and has one of the highest murder rates in the world, it might not occur to you that what is really needed is the legalization of euthanasia. In a 6-3 decision the Constitutional Court of Colombia ruled that "no person can be held criminally responsible for taking the life of a terminally ill patient who has given clear authorization to do so." "Terminally ill" is broadly construed as including cancer, AIDS, and kidney failure. This makes Colombia the first nation to officially sanction euthanasia. The Netherlands winks at it, and a district court in Japan legalizes it in narrowly specified circumstances. Thus does Colombia add to the list of distinctions that makes it a place where euthanasia is more than usually attractive.

■ R. Albert Mohler is president of the huge Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and is here reflecting on Mother Teresa. He offers a very moving tribute. And then this: "She was famous for her good works. This is a challenge to evangelical understanding. Did she trust in her good works for her salvation? Roman Catholic doctrine holds, not only that faith without works is dead, but that our good works cooperate with grace. Evangelicals rightly reject this as the very works righteousness the Apostle Paul so eloquently—and conclusively—rejected. Salvation is entirely by grace through faith, and completely apart from works." The formulation is problematic, also, I believe, from a Reformation perspective, but let that pass. Mohler is prepared to suspend judgment on whether Mother Teresa's theology passed muster by Southern Baptist criteria. His point is directed to his fellow evangelicals: "The answers to these questions are, for now, known only to God. The issue before evangelicals is this: Do we have what it takes to produce a Mother Teresa? Do we have the courage, the concern, and the love for 'the least of these' required for such a ministry? Have we grown spiritually blind and deaf to the 'untouchables' around us? Where are the evangelical orders of committed evangelist/caregivers who will take up a ministry to those like the destitute and dying of Calcutta? Our credibility before the watching world is at stake, and in question."

■ Pick your hero and round up the usual supporting cast. By now we all know about Judge Roy Moore of Gadsden, Alabama, who has the Ten Commandments on his courtroom wall and has visiting clergy open sessions with prayer. Then there is Judge Charles Price of Montgomery, who ruled that Judge Moore must cease and desist. As a consequence, Judge Moore has been given the "Christian statesman of the year" award by an organization led by televangelist D. James Kennedy. Judge Price has been given the "Profile in Courage" by the John F. Kennedy Library at Harvard. No surprises there. Choosing sides in the culture wars depends, in part, on the Kennedys whose approval one covets. The *Tuscaloosa News* clearly favors the Boston Kennedys, accusing Judge Moore of being terribly divisive. The editors complain, inter alia, that the clergy invited to the judge's court are invariably Baptist. It seems highly improbable that being Baptist in Alabama is divisive. What do you suppose is the denominational connection of that fellow in the Supreme Court chambers who prays,

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"God save this honorable court"? And if that isn't a prayer, what is it? As to who is making a divisive issue of all this, the editors might ask why Harvard and the ACLU in New York are so terribly interested in what is happening in a county courtroom in Gadsden, Alabama. It is their interest and their interest alone that generates the interest of D. James Kennedy. And, for that matter, of the local editors. It's been a long time since the *Tuscaloosa News* was at the center of what is called a national controversy. Of course I recognize that, by mentioning the affair, I'm complicit in inflating its importance. Maybe Judge Moore can invite a Methodist preacher the next time and then we can all move on.

■ Father Andrew Greeley, sociologist and writer of novels on Catholic themes, is a man who does not like to be ignored. Before the 1985 Extraordinary Synod on Vatican II, he wrote a little book telling the bishops exactly what they had to do. In his conclusion, he warned the bishops that, if they did not follow his advice, they would be hearing from him again. That put the fear of Greeley into them. Now here is an article in *America* pointing out that 20 percent of Hispanics in the U.S. who were raised Catholic are no longer Catholic. Greeley wrote a similar article some years ago. "There was no reaction to my article nine years ago, no letters to *America*, no private comments from those who work in the Hispanic ministry. Nothing. Not a single word." He concludes that nobody cares about this "cataclysm" among Hispanic Catholics. "The Vatican does not seem worried either." It must be frustrating when nobody pays attention to what you write. But the fact is that what Greeley says about Hispanics is very old news. The further fact is that there are numerous priests and lay people doing their heroic best in Hispanic ministries. The yet further fact is that in November-December Rome held a big Synod for America focused very intently on the evangelization and reevangelization of Hispanics in South and North America. By virtue of my comment, Fr. Greeley will not be able to complain that there was not a word in response to his current article in *America*. The most pertinent word, however, is one that he may not like, namely, many problems are recognized and addressed by others even before Fr. Greeley discovers them.

■ There was all this fuss about the new Holocaust museum here in New York, and whether it was going to be used as a platform for celebrating putative martyrs to the homosexual cause. I wrote a letter to the director that was publicly circulated, and that prompted some public and mostly friendly exchanges with former Mayor Ed Koch, who worried that I was being "used by gay bashers." Well, now the museum is open and it turns out there is a small panel, "Silencing Dissent," which mentions Jews, leftists, homosexuals, and Jehovah's Witnesses, noting that "anyone who did not conform was suspect." Fair enough.

■ Among the more moving and informative tributes to Mother Teresa is an article in *America* by Eileen Egan of Pax Christi. In Mother Teresa's home for the dying in Calcutta, she looked at those on the pallets and said, "They are Jesus. Each one is Jesus in distressing disguise." In the early years, she went out to plead for food, medicine, and funds to care for the abandoned children she had taken under her wing. She also went from office to office and most business people responded, but one man spat in her outstretched hand, saying, "Take that!" "That was for me," Mother Teresa responded quietly, extending her other palm. "Now what about something for my children?" Prodded by a journalist at the Nobel Prize ceremony, Mother Teresa gave a succinct statement of her own identity: "By blood and origin, I am Albanian. My citizenship is Indian. I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the whole world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the heart of Jesus."

■ Imagine ten years. I didn't know him personally, but I'm told that the Rev. Nathaniel Grady, a Methodist, was doing fine work with the poor up in the Bronx. Then, in the late eighties, began the great scare about the sexual abuse of children, and the subsequent prosecutions that can only be described as a witchhunt. Grady and four others were accused of rape, sodomy, and other abuses involving five boys and a girl, ages three to five, and were sentenced to fifteen to forty-five years in prison. Despite the fact that the FBI had secretly videotaped their activities for 640 hours over the three weeks in question and recorded no abuse. The usual suspect psychologists were on hand to induce the children to overcome their "denial" and tell what everyone knew really happened. The convictions of the other four were dismissed several years ago, and today's paper reports that, after he spent ten years in prison, an appellate court has overturned Mr. Grady's conviction. He is now fifty-nine. The Bronx District Attorney, Robert T. Johnson, says they will not try him again, but is admitting to no regrets. The official statement is, "It is not the District Attorney's position that the defendant did not do it." At a news conference, Mr. Grady said of his time in prison: "More than anything else, I learned the art of patience. I am grateful that God spared my mother to see me vindicated." Imagine ten years, and the abuse by the criminal justice system of six teenagers who live with the knowledge of what they were induced to do. In Salem the madness lasted ten months, and then the town leaders repented in sack cloth and ashes. Today the best we can get is, "It is not the District Attorney's position that the defendant did not do it."

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■ "Media-Molded Catholicism" is a reflection by the very Protestant Harold O. J. Brown in the *Religion and Society Report*. He is puzzled by Kenneth Woodward, religion writer for *Newsweek*, who seems to want the Catholic Church "to do something rash." Woodward was the author of the sensationalistic cover story suggesting that the Pope was about to make an infallible declaration of Mary as Co-Redemptrix. "In a sense he seems to be daring the Pope to make it," observes Brown. He continues: "Given the degree to which Catholic authorities consider the concept of declaring Mary Co-Redemptrix unthinkable, one wonders why *Newsweek* chose to make such an issue of it, giving the impression that the promulgation of this new doctrine may be imminent. Perhaps as the secular world and the secular media take note of the fact that there seems to be a revival of interest in religion under way in several elements of society, some leading secular interests want to play a role. Some Catholic sources consider the Co-Redemptrix issue of *Newsweek* a real affront, even an attack on the integrity of Catholicism." Since Catholicism is not going to go away and seems to be growing in influence, Brown thinks media mandarins have decided they should have a hand in redirecting it in ways more to their liking. He cites the much-debated ABC television series *Nothing Sacred*. "The newsletter *catholic eye* asks what the reaction would be if ABC launched a series with a rabbi who doesn't shrink from calling Moses a myth and the Torah bunkum, supports intermarriage with Gentiles, denounces Israel as 'Nazi,' and supports the Arab cause in Israel/Palestine. One hardly needs to ask." The odder thing is that some Catholics of the liberal persuasion think *Nothing Sacred* is nothing to get excited about. One liberal magazine, fearfully insecure about Catholics being perceived as philistines who cannot take a joke, attacks the Catholic League's protest of the program and cites Flannery O'Connor's sage observation that, if Catholics show that they do not recognize art, people may be justified in having doubts about their beliefs. The difference between Flannery O'Connor and the editors in question is twofold: 1) She understood that Catholic faith and life rubs against the vulgar grain of bourgeois culture; 2) It would never have occurred to her to view *Nothing Sacred* as art.

■ "It was a bad day for Father Neuhaus. The neocon vs. theocon controversy has wounded him seriously. It would be a mistake, however, to count Neuhaus out of the battle." Well, that's a consolation, I guess. The comment is from the "Neuhaus Watch," a regular feature in *Christian News*, reporting on our 1997 Erasmus Lecture with Justice Clarence Thomas. "How did Father Neuhaus get a drink thrown in his face at his own party? . . . Neuhaus could not have predicted that Thomas would turn on him, but he did." Lively writing, of a sort, but all nonsense of course. Justice Thomas did indicate reservations about aspects of what FT and other "theocons" have said about judicial usurpation, but all within the context of recognizing that these are important questions to raise, and in a manner entirely amicable. The same spirit marked the next day's conference with Thomas and a number of scholars discussing the role of the judiciary in our political order. We are expecting to publish his lecture in a forthcoming issue. I do have bad days, or at least some days less exhilarating than others, but the day of the Erasmus Lecture emphatically was not one of them. Readers of the "Neuhaus Watch" should know that its author has a treasure trove of inside information about all kinds of things that just ain't so.

■ Poor dear old Yale. It just can't understand the petty intolerance of its infatuation with tolerance. Readers are familiar with the law school's refusal to let the Christian Legal Society recruit there because it "discriminates" against non-Christians. (See my exchange with Dean Anthony T. Kronman in the August/September 1997 issue.) Now there are the "Yale Five," Orthodox Jewish students who want to be exempted from Yale's requirement that for two years students live in coed dorms. The Yale Five say that boys and girls in the same bedrooms and bathrooms is a circumstance that violates their religious and moral convictions. Among the most fatuously smug and narrow-minded of the defenses of Yale's refusal to allow an exemption from its rules is offered by David Denby, writing in the *New Yorker*: "Temptations must surround the orthodox of any faith when they leave family and community and enter the world," writes Mr. Denby. Indeed, he suggests, it is the solemn duty of the university to provide temptations. One of the Jewish students said, "We cannot, in good conscience, live in a place where women are permitted to stay overnight in men's rooms." To which Denby offers the presumably knock-down argument, "In that case, [he] should avoid living in big-city apartment buildings as well." Boys and girls living and sleeping together is Yale's elevated aspiration toward educational excellence. "Living in a coed dorm for two years is now part of the known Yale experience," writes Denby, "just as taking certain required courses, like the Literature Humanities and the Contemporary Civilization courses at Columbia, is part of the life of other schools." The "just as" is worth noting. Dormitory rutting, it seems, is right up there with Matthew Arnold's maxim about the best that has been thought and said. Mr. Denby is the thorough traditionalist in defending the coed dorm tradition of, say, the last twenty years. "The experience of confronting both new ideas and people who think differently from oneself has traditionally formed the heart of a liberal education." How else

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are Orthodox Jews to know that some people are lewd, immodest, and prone to engage in sexual intercourse outside of marriage if Yale does not see to it? Nobody ever said that the educational mission of the university is easy. Denby concludes, "In this society, existence is rarely free from jostling: we all, every day, find our deepest convictions offended, even traduced by *something*. In that respect, the Yale Five, whether they get their way or not, will have to take their chances along with the rest of us." Why, of course. It's part of "entering the world." *Our* world, in which they must become like us (or at least like David Denby). It is the new world of secularism's oppressive tolerance. And to think it was only fifty years ago that Bill Buckley could raise such a ruckus by suggesting in *God and Man at Yale* that maybe the university was less serious than it should be about transmitting the Christian heritage.

■ How did we manage all this time to get along without a Surgeon General? As the last one would reproach us, just think of all those children growing up without knowing what to do in the back seat, and how to do it safely. Ponder, if you dare, a generation deprived of governmental instruction in the joys of onanism. But now President Clinton has put forward Dr. David Satcher, who seems to be an admirable man in many respects. He appears to have a blind spot, however, when it comes to infanticide. Supporting partial-birth abortion, he says, "I feel that if there are risks for severe health consequences for the mother, then that decision should not be made by the government but by the woman in conjunction with her family and physician." (He apparently forgot the conventional nod to "her pastor or spiritual guide.") As everybody should know by now, there is never an instance in which the partial delivery and abortion of a child is necessary to protect the health of the mother. Never. The American Medical Association opposes it; both houses of Congress have voted to ban it. This time President Clinton vetoed the ban very quietly, not even attempting to publicly justify an action that can only be explained by his captivity to the don't-give-an-inch abortion lobby. It is a shame that Dr. Satcher would begin his term of office by displaying his captivity to his boss's captivity.

■ While at Harvard, President Jiang Zemin fulsomely praised the late Harvard sinologist John King Fairbank for his steadfast work in burnishing the image of Chinese Communists. Jiang presented the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research a set of the newly published *Twenty-Four Histories with Mao Zedong's Comments*, which he called "a rich heritage of philosophy, in understanding and drawing useful lessons from Chinese history." The praise of Fairbank is amply deserved and the gift most fitting. Through purges, rectification programs, and politically contrived droughts that killed no less than fifty million Chinese, nobody among Western academics did more than Professor Fairbank to protect Mao and his heirs from the criticism of those not entirely persuaded of the merits of China's great social experiment. John King Fairbank. When another generation is tempted to play useful idiot to the next great tyranny appearing on the world stage, his name should be remembered.

■ President Clinton's lawyer, Robert Bennett, on *Face the Nation*: "There is absolutely no unique characteristic of any kind . . . in terms of size, shape, direction. . . . The President is a normal man." At the risk of indulging in nostalgia, one cannot help but remember fondly the Nixon years when the American people had only to be reassured that their President was not a crook.

■ Not for nothing does she call herself a misanthrope. Florence King was less than edified by the big Promise Keepers (PK) rally in Washington. "Like all people driven by emotion, PK could be swung like a lariat; the right is in trouble if we think that 700,000 weeping men is good news in an era that is already close to rule by hysteria. Whatever happened to our traditional distrust of the mob? I also reject the view put forth by several gleeful conservative pundits that PK dealt a fatal blow to radical feminism. After three decades of male bashing, what is there to gloat about in the spectacle of 700,000 men curdling with guilt and begging for forgiveness? It sounds like successful brainwashing to me." One need not endorse the implicit cynicism in order to recognize that she has a point. The Zeitgeist embraced in the name of Jesus is still the Zeitgeist.

■ Viktor Frankl, one of the century's foremost psychiatrists, died at age ninety-two in Vienna. I suppose we carried one of the last, maybe the last, major piece on him to appear in this country, "Viktor Frankl at Ninety: An Interview" (April 1995) by Matthew Scully. As a young man, Frankl had worked with Freud, but later he was to criticize him for neglecting the "upper stories" of human nature. By that he meant, as Scully recently explained in the *Wall Street Journal*, that Freud neglected "man as a creature of conscience and not just a bundle of appetites, drives, and a lust for power." Frankl spent three years in Hitler's death camps, Auschwitz included, and later wrote *Man's Search for Meaning*, a book that sold in the millions and was translated into almost every known language. Camp inmates, he wrote, were stripped of everything. "Reduced, literally, to our naked existence, we needed to stop asking ourselves about the meaning of life, and to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life—daily and hourly. . . . Man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz;

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however, he is also that being who entered those chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips." Frankl was critical of the countercultural turn of the 1960s, both here and in Europe, and fell into disfavor. On his last visit to the U.S. in 1990, Mr. Scully reports, none of the talk shows were interested in having him as a guest. One turned him down because it had already booked another famed Austrian, Dr. Ruth. Viktor Frankl did a great thing with his long life: He reminded us of human dignity, meaning the human capacity for moral greatness.

■ According to Jewish tradition, azure (Hebrew: *tekhelet*) is the blue color of the sky and the sea and other things eternal. It is the color associated with the Jewish people and, consequently, the Star of David and the stripes of the Israeli flag. *Azure* is also the name of a new quarterly journal published in Jerusalem by the Shalem Center (*shalem* meaning completeness, wholeness, well-being). Printed in Hebrew and English editions, *Azure* tries to apply traditional Jewish insights to modern issues of public life. If you think this sounds like a Jewish version of FIRST THINGS, you're on to something. Among the questions of intense interest to *Azure* and the Shalem Center: the moral and metaphysical foundations of self-government and a free economy, the necessity and limits of tolerance, the search for a religiously informed public discourse, and so on. Many of the editors and writers of *Azure* appear to be religiously traditional, but at the same time liberal in the classic (and our) sense of the word. They point the way to a serious Judaism that is on the other side of today's acrimonious religious disputes (see, inter alia, Clifford E. Librach, "The Fragmented Faith of American Jews," FT, February 1997). Interested readers may get more information by contacting *Azure*, c/o The Shalem Center, 22a Hatzfira Street, Jerusalem, Israel (Fax number: 011-972-2-566-1171). *Azure* also has a page on the Shalem Center's website (www.shalem.org.il), which includes the full text of select essays; e-mail is azure@shalem.org.il.

■ Picky, picky. Letters protest my November reference, intended favorably, to a "fulsome" account of Christian faith. Reaching for Webster's Ninth Collegiate, I find this: "Many commentators condemn the modern use of *fulsome* without pejorative overtones as misuse or ignorance. This use is, however, the earliest and etymologically purest sense of the word." I like to think that I am neither purist nor pedant. As I have had occasion to say before, I write for the ear, and "fulsome" sounds very nice to me. In addition, it is a kindness to rescue words that are so misused that their correct use is deemed a misuse. Note that this is not a fulsome defense of "fulsome," in either sense of the word.

■ There are two items I had hoped to have ready for this issue. The first is about the most remarkable campaign of protest orchestrated by Muslim groups in reaction to my October 1997 review of Bat Ye'or's book on Islam and Christianity. Some of it is civil. Much of it is chilling—and clearly intended to be so. I want also to address substantive questions such as those aired by Professor Toby E. Huff in the Correspondence section of this issue. The second item has to do with a controversial statement on homosexuality recently issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. I was working on both, but then the Pope did me the great honor of appointing me a member of the Synod on America, so I must be off to Rome for a month. Please be patient and I'll try to have them ready for the next issue. I would not be surprised were there also something of interest to report about the Synod.

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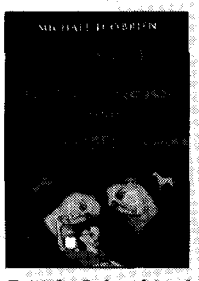

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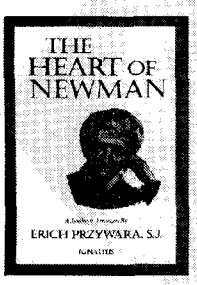

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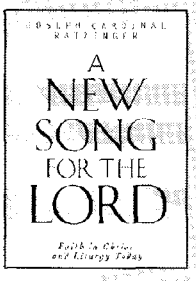
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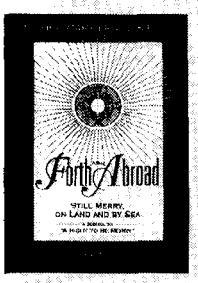

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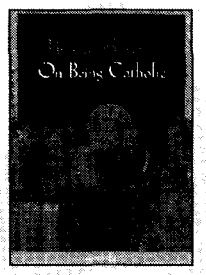

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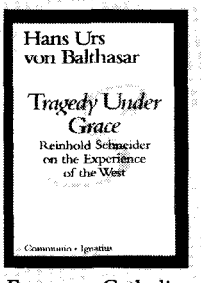

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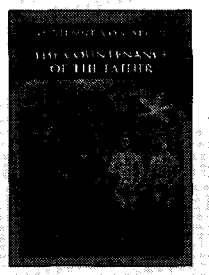

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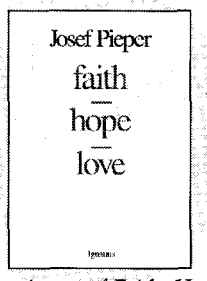

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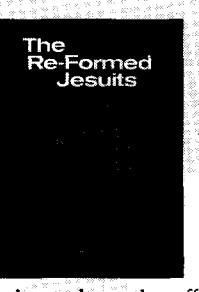

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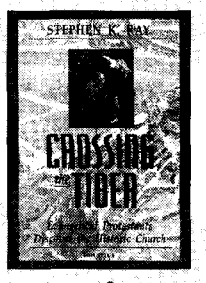

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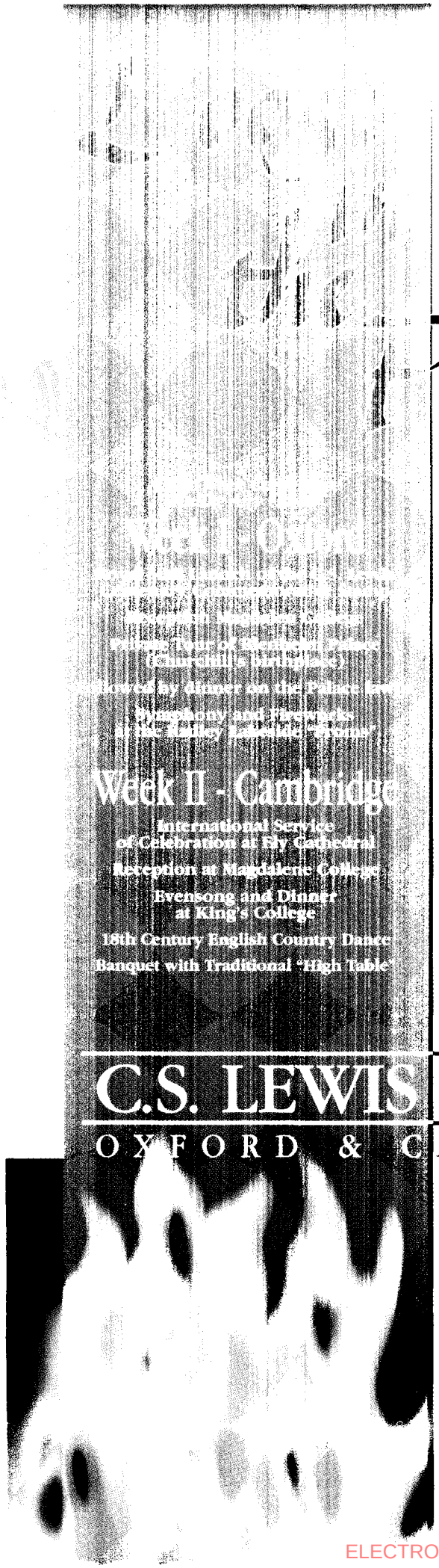

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